

AMA Mission

The Academy of Model Aeronautics is a world-class association of modelers organized for the purpose of promotion, development, education, advancement, and safeguarding of modeling activities.

The Academy provides leadership, organization, competition, communication, protection, representation, recognition, education, and scientific/technical development to modelers.

AMA Vision

We, the members of the Academy of Model Aeronautics, are the pathway to the future of modeling and are committed to making modeling the foremost aviation sport/hobby in the world. This vision is accomplished through:

Affiliation with its valued associates, the modeling industry, and governments.

A process of continuous improvement.

A commitment to leadership, quality, education and scientific/technical development.

A safe, secure, enjoyable modeling environment.

The Organization

The primary purpose of the AMA (Academy of Model Aeronautics) is to promote and foster educational and scientific advancement in model aeronautics.

Founded in 1936, the AMA is the world's largest model aviation organization, representing a membership of more than 140,000.

AMA is the voice of its membership, providing liaison with the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Communications Commission, and other government agencies. AMA also works with local governments, zoning boards, and parks departments to promote the interests of local chartered clubs.

AMA seeks to introduce young men and women to the art and craft of aeromodeling. Through an active educational outreach program, AMA supports teachers and community-based organizations that wish to infuse topics of math, science, and technology with aviation activities.

AMA supports charitable organizations and education through model aviation.

AMA is an associate member of the National Aeronautic Association (NAA). Through the NAA, AMA is recognized by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), the world governing body of all aviation activity, as the only organization that may direct US participation in international aeromodeling activities.

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While the most publicized portion of the aeromodeling hobby uses radio control, there are still many active modelers enjoying and/or competing in assorted free flight (no control after launch) and control line and static scale events.

The AMA is a non-profit organization. The management of the AMA's affairs is vested in a governing body known as the Executive Council (EC). The EC consists of 15 volunteers: the AMA President, AMA Executive Vice President, AMA Chief Financial Officer, 11 AMA District Vice Presidents, and the NAA President.

The AMA hires approximately 55 people to provide the required services to its membership. Day-to-day operations and direction of the staff falls to the Executive Director (ED), who has the senior paid position on the staff. The ED is hired and provided direction by the EC. The majority of the staff and the ED are located at the AMA headquarters in Muncie, Indiana. Their salaries are funded by membership dues.

The AMA has divided the US into districts to help with administrative coordination. There are a total of 11 districts throughout the US. Each district is overseen by a volunteer District Vice President (DVP) and by a number of volunteer Assistant Vice Presidents (AVP) under each DVP.

On the grounds of the AMA headquarters is the National Model Aviation Museum. The museum houses the largest collection of model aircraft in the US. Also located on the grounds is a 1,000-acre flying site. Both the museum and flying site are open year-round, but are closed on certain days.

AMA sanctions more than 2,000 model competitions throughout the country each year, and it certifies official model flying records on a national and international level.

AMA organizes the annual National Aeromodeling Championships: the world's largest model airplane competition. This internationally famous event is affectionately referred to as the "Nats."

Membership Categories

1. Leader Member (LM) is the highest category that can be obtained voluntarily. An application must be submitted by the member and approved by at least three other LMs or by a DVP. LMs are classified in three areas: Administrative, Industry, and Scientific. LMs are allowed to vote in special elections and for bylaws changes. LMs are allowed a lower AMA number.

2. Contest Director (CD) is another voluntary role; its mission is to ensure that sanctioned events are run strictly in accordance with competition regulations both safely and smoothly. Once a probationary sanctioned event is run, the CD may have dues cut in half every year an event is run. CDs are Open members in regards to voting privileges. Once a member has been awarded the status of a CD, he/she is a CD for life unless that status is revoked by the EC. CDs are also allowed lower AMA numbers. A CD must, at all times, remember that he/she is a representative of AMA and will conduct himself/herself in a professional manner.

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3. Open membership is the most common level; it is bestowed upon a person who joins the AMA at the \$58-per-year rate. Open members are allowed to vote in all AMA elections.
4. The Park Pilot Program (PPP) is the newest membership category in the AMA. PPP members join the AMA at a discounted rate of \$29 per year. These members are required to fly airplanes and helicopters that are limited by speed and weight. PPP members are not allowed to vote in elections and have limited liability insurance amounts.
5. The AMA offers Life Memberships for a one-time fee of \$1,500. This fee can be paid over a period of four years. Life Members may request a lower AMA number that begins with the letter L.

Membership Plans

1. A Youth membership (to age 19) is free of charge without magazine(s); \$15 for *MA*, \$9.95 for *Park Pilot*, or \$19.95 for both are subscription rates for all Youth members. Through a recent collaboration with the EAA, the AMA is now partnering with the Young Eagles program by offering reciprocating memberships to EAA youth. In 2011, the same relationship is planned for the Civil Air Patrol Cadets.
2. Senior membership dues are \$48 per year.
3. Family membership dues are \$30 per year and are available if a family member in the same household is an Open Member.

Annual dues are prorated for first-time members. They may join at any time during the year, but their memberships expire at the end of the calendar year. They will have a prorated fee for the following year to make up for the time missed during the current year. If you leave AMA for a period of five years, you are considered a new member if you rejoin and can get prorated fees for the first year.

Programs and Incentives

1. Sign 3 Fly Free allows Open Members to get an annual dues credit for signing up three new AMA Open or Senior members in a calendar year.
2. Flying Site Assistance offers customized resources for members looking to develop new flying fields or can help chartered clubs save their fields from pending losses. Specialized assistance is available by contacting Tony Stillman, AMA's Flying Site Assistance Coordinator.
3. The Introductory Pilot Program is available to all chartered clubs. Qualified pilots may participate. Instructors can train non-AMA members to fly models during a time period of 60 consecutive days, and students are covered by the liability provisions of the AMA insurance policy.

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4. AMA's National Model Aviation Museum is dedicated to the preservation of flying model aircraft and features exhibits on Free Flight, Control Line, and Radio Control.

5. The Hobby Shop Incentive Program will reward hobby shop owners, while giving the new modeler access to quick, easy, real-time membership sign-up. All that is required to become a new member is to fill out the online application at www.modelaircraft.org or www.parkflyer.org or a regular application while at the hobby shop. There is also a hobby shop point-of-purchase display that will help promote the membership program.

6. Disaster assistance is designed to grant immediate financial help to AMA chartered clubs whose flying sites have been damaged by natural disasters such as a tornado, hurricane, earthquake, or firestorm. The grant is designed to assist clubs in clearing debris and such so that the field is once again accessible and usable by club members. It is not designed to pay for repairs to structures or facilities, except to the extent of making the site and runway adequate for flying once again.

7. Superfund Site Assistance has evolved through a partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It allows chartered clubs to use reclaimed land.

8. Flying Site Development/Improvement Grants can provide up to 10% of the total cost of a project, not to exceed a maximum payment of \$5,000.

Clubs

Established in the mid-1960s, the chartered club is a local affiliation of the AMA. It is governed by suggested bylaws and safety guidelines provided by the AMA and club-instituted policies. It is the vehicle for recognition of any geographic grouping of AMA members. The number of clubs fluctuates from year to year but averages over 2,400. Clubs offer many activities for the model aviation enthusiast, sponsor local charity events, and host fun-flies throughout the calendar year, and most clubs offer free pilot training and instruction.

Club charters cost \$30 per year. There must be a minimum of five adult members to charter a club. All club officers are required to be AMA members. The safety officer is the only position required to have a valid email address, although the club's point of contact will be better served if he or she also has access to the Internet and a valid email address.

The charter provides the local organized group with added insurance protection for the club, the club officers related to their duties, and flying site owners. Other services such as assistance in acquisition and retention of flying sites, materials for public relations, flying site improvement grants, disaster relief assistance up to \$500, and legal counsel are available to the chartered club.

Model Aviation School Clubs (MASC) will begin in 2011. These new chartered clubs will support and promote efforts in public schools, providing educational activities through model aviation design, construction, and flying. Youth membership is free, and the school employee acting as the club sponsor/advisor will receive an Open membership. Each club sponsor, as well

as each school library, will receive a free subscription to both *Model Aviation* and *Park Pilot* magazines.

Education

In 1995 the Academy established the staff position of education director and a committee whose designated responsibility is to address the following mission statement:

“The mission of this committee is to provide the Academy guidance and assistance in the formulation, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of educational programs and policies.”

This guidance and assistance should help AMA realize the ideals outlined in its vision and mission statements and assist the Executive Council in its effort to further the educational role of the Academy. For more information, visit the education portion of the AMA Web site at www.modelaircraft.org/education.aspx.

Education Activities

The Academy maintains education programs directed toward newcomers to the hobby/sport of aeromodeling. Building and flying model airplanes has been a gateway to aviation for legions of aviators and engineers—from Wilbur and Orville Wright, who invented the first controlled, powered, man-carrying flying machine, to present-day inventors and pilots such as Burt Rutan, Paul MacCready, and five-time space shuttle Commander “Hoot” Gibson. Almost every aeronautical principle and mechanical device keeping full-scale aircraft aloft can be found in a model airplane.

The hands-on, practical nature of the hobby develops an in-depth understanding of how thrust must overcome drag to create lift, while maintaining control. Electric motors and piston and turbine engines operate within much the same parameters as their full-scale counterparts, control surfaces must be aligned and properly coordinated, and electronics must be precisely installed and maintained to enable safe and efficient flight.

Throughout aviation history and up to the present day, models have been and continue to be used as proof-of-concept vehicles in full-scale aircraft design. Modeling is essential to math, science, and engineering—in fact, to all creative thinking. The model is a metaphor—a way of understanding cause and effect, a context, an outcome.

A theoretical construct in math that opens a new understanding of the natural world, a biochemical representation that leads to new cures for disease, a three-dimensional representation of an aircraft to fly on Mars—all begin as models in the mind, an essential step in the creative process that provides scaffolds to understanding.

Model-building activities enable students to develop “spatial intelligence” and experience the serendipity that begins with trial and error, tempered by data collection and thoughtful reflection, leading to insight and discovery. Building and flying model aircraft are “hands-on” experiences

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to motivate and inspire a future generation of problem-solvers and inventors, opening doors to careers in aviation, while helping them become active participants as citizens in a complex and fast-changing world.

Information is available for a wide range of ages and interests from youth to senior citizens. A partial listing of the activities includes:

1. **Take-off and Grow (TAG) Grant Program:** Developed to encourage our members and clubs to promote modeling as a positive recreational activity to those in their communities, TAG was the first of several new programs implemented by AMA in 2007. Intended primarily to indoctrinate and welcome the general public to our hobby, TAG basically provides a one-day extensive introduction of model aviation with the intent of drawing new people into our hobby. This is followed by a flight-training program for new members gained from the opening-day activities.
2. **Club Outreach:** Programs and assistance are available for clubs to reach the community at all levels: children, seniors, and adults. The Education staff is dedicated to helping AMA clubs make their education outreach programs successful.
3. **Teacher-Oriented Materials:** The development and maintenance of classroom-related activities designed to stimulate interest by using aeromodeling as an educational tool within all elements of the curriculum. This includes the AeroLab DVD/CD set for teacher use in the classroom. Information and the order form are available at www.modelaircraft.org/files/education/AEROLAB.pdf.
4. **Model Aviation School Clubs (MASC):** New in 2011, a club charter program for groups of students with an interest in model aviation to form a club within their school.
5. **Networking:** Working through teachers' conventions, forums, and industry liaison, AMA is providing information relative to successful, established program models that exist within the aeromodeling community. Examples of successes can be obtained from AMA HQ or through the Education portion of the AMA website. For specific information, members are encouraged to contact the Education Department at AMA HQ or Education Committee members.
6. **Scholarship Program:** Since 1970 the AMA has provided scholarships to young men and women seeking to continue their education in colleges and universities. The primary awards are presented through the Charles Hampson Grant Scholarship Program, which is funded by a variety of sources including donations, memorials, and the AMA general fund.

The top winner of the C.H. Grant award also receives an award provided by the Toledo Weak Signals from monies generated from the club's annual trade show and exposition. The applications are evaluated by a three-member committee. It rates the applicants in several major categories, including grade-point average, test results, and various activities including aeromodeling.

High achievement in all of the categories is important for the maximum amount of scholarship awarded to an individual; however, a person who is not academically at the top of his or her class

may win a significant scholarship award if he/she is active in the community, in aeromodeling, or in both.

Information regarding applications may be obtained from the AMA Education Department at AMA HQ or by visiting the AMA Education section at www.modelaircraft.org/education.aspx.

Insurance Benefits Summary

AMA insurance is provided to its members as secondary coverage if the member has another form of liability coverage (such as homeowner's). If not, AMA insurance becomes primary coverage. The coverage for clubs, officers, and flying site owners is primary. A landowner can be covered for as little as \$60 annually; if this coverage is purchased, it is primary coverage for the landowner.

1. \$2,500,000 per occurrence, general liability coverage to members, clubs, and site owners.
2. \$25,000 medical coverage—AD&D policy (\$10,000 death benefit).
3. \$1,000 fire, theft, and vandalism policy.
4. PPP members have \$500,000 liability insurance, no accident/medical insurance, and no fire, theft, or vandalism insurance.

Radio Control, Free Flight, and Control Line models are covered. Liability also covers model boats, model cars, and model rockets.

Your AMA insurance covers you from the time your payment is received. Even if you aren't flying, it is useful in the event of a break-in to your vehicle or home resulting in a loss of modeling supplies or a fire when your home insurance does not provide full coverage.

While the insurance benefit to members is often given as the primary reason for new members to join the AMA, the insurance program is actually just a means toward the main goal of promoting model aviation. Having the insurance makes it easier to gain access to flying sites.

Historical Information

Before the AMA came into existence, aeromodelers belonged to a variety of organizations including the Junior Air League, the Junior Aviation League, and the Junior NAA (the aeromodeling branch of the National Aeronautic Association). The Junior NAA, although it sponsored the first Nats in 1923, struggled to be a true aeromodeling organization. The idea for the AMA began in 1935 (perhaps even before that) at the Nats in Detroit, Michigan. Leaders and contestants were interested in a self-governing body of aeromodeling experts, the thought being that there should be expert guidance of, for, and by model builders. Modelers wanted a single voice.

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First known as the American Academy of Model Aeronautics (AAMA), the organization dropped “American” from its official title within a few years. The AMA’s first mailing address, 1732 RCA Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, New York, solidified its legitimacy in 1936. Later that year, AMA headquarters moved to DuPont Circle in Washington DC as part of the NAA.

AMA elected officials included an Executive Committee, Advisory Board, and Executive Council, and it had a publication, *Model Aviation*. The first issue of *Model Aviation*, June 1936, included a list of these newly elected officials, a two-page description of the 1936 Nats, and seven pages listing the 18 Nats events, contestants, and results.

Both the NAA and the AMA moved their offices to the Willard Hotel in Washington DC in 1940. While in the same building, it was the first time that the AMA had separate offices from the NAA, along with its own budget and officers. However, it was not until 1966 that the AMA became fully independent of the NAA.

In 1988 the AMA Executive Council formed a committee with the goal of finding properties for a new headquarters and national flying site. The committee felt that the move would benefit all AMA clubs and the community in which it would reside. The Midwest became the choice region due to location and land availability after over 50 proposals were reviewed. By 1991, Muncie, Indiana was the chosen location. On June 13-14 in 1992, a Grand Opening was held for the new national flying site.

Model Aviation Magazine

In 2000 *Model Aviation (MA)* magazine celebrated 25 years of publication in its current format. The magazine existed in many different physical iterations since it was first published in 1936 as a newsletter-type publication. Distribution was limited to AMA leaders and subscribers until 1954, when circulation was expanded to all members.

In 1966 the AMA approached the publishers of *American Aircraft Modeler (AAM)* magazine about the possibility of incorporating a section called “AMA News” into their magazine rather than printing the small but costly *MA*. AMA members received *AAM* featuring “AMA News” as part of their membership beginning with the July/August 1966 issue and ending with the March 1975 issue. *AAM* went bankrupt in February 1975, leaving the AMA with no means to communicate with its members. AMA officers realized that a magazine rather than a newsletter was more beneficial to AMA members, thus it resurrected *MA* as a magazine. To this day, AMA members continue to receive *MA* as a monthly member benefit.

As the flagship publication of the AMA, *MA* is the best place to find information concerning new products, aeromodeling events, federal regulations, and helpful how-to articles.

Communication

As with any organization the size of the AMA, communication with the membership is critical in distributing policy, procedures and programs and getting member ideas to the EC and staff.

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Official publications and communication avenues available to AMA members are:

1. *MA*, provided monthly as a benefit of membership.
2. Sport Aviator an online magazine provided to members and nonmembers.
3. *Park Pilot* magazine, provided quarterly to all PPP members or available to anyone as a subscription.
4. *AMA Insider* provided bimonthly for club leaders, DVPs/AVPs and LMs, but is available to any member who subscribes. The *AMA Insider* is sent directly to members via their email.
5. *AMA Today* provided monthly via email to all members, is the quickest method of communication to pass along updates of ongoing programs to the majority of members.
6. An Annual General Membership Meeting is required each year, but two or three are generally held across the country each year.
7. DVP/AVP/LM discussions at club meetings or flying events, and roundtable discussions as led by the AMA Education Outreach Specialists.
8. The AMA Forum online is available for open discussion and is a database of anything related to model aviation. It is monitored/reviewed by the president of the AMA, DVPs, AVPs, LMs, and AMA staff and provides members the opportunity for discussion with other AMA members across the US or to ask for official responses about safety or liability insurance issues. Members can post questions and responses on the forum, but it is “read only” to nonmembers.
9. The AMA Web site contains all programs, documents, staff listings, EC meeting minutes, and a feature called “ASK AMA” which sends a member’s question directly to the ED/staff for answers.
10. Each of the 11 districts has its own Web site to communicate directly with its members, but the public can access it as well.
11. In 2011 the AMA will begin development of a branded Chartered Club/District Dashboard Web site that will integrate local club information with regional, state, and national information. This will be free of charge to our Chartered Clubs and an option for each individual club.

Awards

Individual

1. Fellowship: A Fellowship is the highest honor the AMA can bestow on an individual. It carries free AMA dues for life and is generally awarded after nine years of outstanding service by nonsalaried officers. EC approval is required.

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2. Distinguished Service: AMA's second highest award for individuals. Awarded for longtime voluntary service and/or serving six years as an EC member. EC approval is required.

3. AMA Hall of Fame: Established in 1969, the Hall of Fame honors those men and women who have made significant contributions to the sport of aeromodeling. The list of members is long and distinguished. Contributions may be in volunteer or administrative activities, product development, competition performance, or a variety or combination of activities. In 2010 the name of the "Model Aviation Hall of Fame" was changed to the "AMA Hall of Fame." The selection committee is composed of past and present AMA presidents and one individual selected from each of the 11 districts by its respective DVP. Each year a new class is inducted into the AMA Hall of Fame, and the winners are announced in *MA* magazine.

4. President's: Awarded by the president of the AMA to honor, recognize, acknowledge, or thank for service, grants, gifts, and/or the like to people, organizations, or institutions.

5. Legion of Honor: Awarded by the EVP to thank people, clubs, organizations, companies, and the like for monetary contributions to the AMA. This includes pledges, endowments, gifts and acknowledgements pecuniary in nature.

6. Superior Service: Nationally recognized and heralded for long service of a superior nature. EC approval is required.

7. Carl Goldberg Vital People: This award is presented annually to "vital people in the background of the modeling movement whose efforts enhance the enjoyment of the hobby and whose accomplishments are seldom formally acknowledged." Any member can nominate a deserving individual. The recipients will be selected by a committee of members consisting of one from each AMA district.

8. Exemplary: Honors an EC member for three years of volunteer service.

9. Meritorious Service: For outstanding service that has been performed by an EC member and is automatically issued to outgoing EC members.

10. District Service: Awarded by a DVP to honor an individual within his/her district. EC approval is required after three awards within a calendar year.

Club

1. Award of Excellence: Highest honor for clubs. Clubs are typically nominated by a DVP but can be nominated by any member and approved by the EC.

2. Award of Merit: Given by DVPs to clubs that have shown outstanding community service and continuously demonstrated their willingness to go above and beyond in their efforts to promote model aviation and the AMA. A DVP can award up to three per calendar year without EC approval.

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3. Leader Club: Can be earned by any AMA chartered club by meeting certain standards of community service and activity. There are three levels of AMA Leader Clubs: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. Once a club meets the minimum criteria, it qualifies for different levels based on performance.

Note: This Primer does not take the place of the *Membership Manual* or any AMA document on the Web site. The information provided is accurate and current as of the time of creation but should be used as reference only. Please consult the *Membership Manual* or the AMA Web site for the most current information. Hard copies of this document may contain outdated/rescinded information.