



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of FRANK B. BUSHEY

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Written by FBB (1952), Reformatted by JS (06/2012)

The following President's Column ran in the January 1952 issue of the Model Aviation newsletter.

President's Column

At this time I wish to extend my humble greetings to all AMA members. I feel as though I know all of you personally. I feel, too, a real responsibility to every one of you because I have experience many of the frustrations, many of the galling delays and often, the anger arising from what has seemed to be the failure of the Academy - - its officers, its organization, its members - - to do the job we flyers expect of it. For over ten years I have sought, as a third-rate contestant, to find the answers too many of our questions. Today I find myself genuinely surprised that, honored by you as your national president; many of those answers are still to be sought.

At your president for 1952 I pledge myself to seek those answers for you. But I'll need your help. I'll need the help of every guy that flies a model. I think that I know a number of the questions but from Maine to California am a lot of territory and many of you fellows have scores of questions. I want to hear them. I want to hear also your solution for as many of those questions as you've found the answers because I feel a direct responsibility to you to find those answers.

As I see it, our most important need is an intelligent revision of our present bylaws into an up-to-date, working instrument that will aid us in reaching our goals. At present, the president of the Academy can do as much or as little as he chooses. The same thing applies to every officer in the Academy. The only possible way that I, as your president, can accomplish this task is by the help of every member of the Academy in thinking through and formulating the answers that must be encompassed in our needed bylaws.

If we, as members, sit around the club house or flying site and just grouse and bitch, that will represent the total accomplishment. But if you are interested enough to put your thoughts in writing, to study our present limited bylaws and think through solving answers to those limitations - - and get those thoughts in to me through the Academy, I promise you that before the year is up I will present you with the opportunity to put into effect the changes we need.

Those are bold words and as I say them ominous figures flash before me. Significant of the government is important is the tabulation of the vote that elected me your president. Of the eligible voters only about 1000 cast ballots. But the most incredible part of that ballot was the fact that 332 votes - only one third of the total - decided the election and that only a 15-vote margin over Pop Robbers. With these figures in front of me I am indeed humble. With thousands of guts depending upon the decisions that come out of the Academy, less than one in ten felt his voice important enough to register - and mind you, this is one of the largest ballots ever cast in the Academy. In my mind this is a principal reason why the whole set-up needs strengthening. As modelers we are loud and noisy on the field but silent, inarticulate and irresponsible about the

really important things. I haven't the figures on numbers voting on rule changes but I suspect they are no better.

This is your Academy. That "Of, By, and For the Modeler" slogan is meaningless when we, as voting members, sit on our broad posteriors damning the powers that be and waiting for some divine province to do the work. We refer to the mythical "they" in laying blame on failure without realizing that the "they" is "we."

No Contest Board member, no vice president, no committee member is worth a hoot unless every decision he makes truly represents the best thinking of every license holder he represents. That has been out fault in the past and will continue to be our great weakness if we allow it to persist. I shall instruct every officer to poll his district before he voices an opinion on any matter of national interest. The Academy and its offices in Washington will do its best to help these individual officers make those polls but you as voting license holders – members in every sense of the word – must accept your responsibility to voice your opinions if we are to accomplish anything. If I felt that you would not or could not carry your share of responsibility in this, our most important function, I would tender my immediate resignation.

I fully expect you to measure up to what has been termed my "idealistic views" because as I have met you in the field and shared your problems with mine, I've found that you are a pretty good bunch of Joes with a lot of good horse sense just needing a chance to get your good ideas expressed in the right way at the right time. Well, fellows, this is it. Start those club house bull-sessions and beat that secretary over the head until he gets your ideas in the mail and watch this column for the results.

NAA has a new president and a new general manager. I intend to meet with them at an early date. I am satisfied that our working arrangements with NAA are sound but they do need to be put into more concrete form. I shall give you a complete picture of these relations at an early date.

Our Nationals have been located in one section of the country too long to be truly a "National." That matter, too, will be completely reported to you.

There is a plan, ably instigated during Ken Held's term of office, to get Model Aviation into a more satisfactory form both in its makeup and in the manner it reaches you. If this plan won't or can't work you will be informed and asked for help. I can do nothing without your help but with your help I pledge you my very best efforts.

Sincerely,
Frank B. Bushey

The following President's Column ran in the April 1952 issue of Model Aviation newsletter.

President's Column

The ball is rolling, gathering momentum. Letters are beginning to arrive. Individuals, clubs, and associations are getting their views on paper. So far most of it is getting acquainted material. What we need is to get all the major issues out in the open so we can examine them clearly – then we can proceed to put them together in sound legal terms to insure that our (all of us, modelers, Leader members, Contest Directors, and officers) gains will not be lost.

One question already raised concerns the duties, responsibilities, and authorities of the District Vice Presidents. Our present bylaws treat this matter sketchily, to say the least. Actually all the VP does is act as a member of the Executive Council. What do you think he should do? Where should his authority begin and end? Should it be delegated specifically by action of the Executive Council or should it be completely stated in our constitution?

Apply this same formula to the other officers and let's get under way in earnest. Try to get the thought expressed in terms that will defy misinterpretation, incongruity, and deliberate misconception.

How should our Nationals be conducted? Should we set up a permanent committee or should we leave it as it is now and work through local leaders? Ed Lidgard took over the Wakefield Committee last year and did a bang-up job with plenty of tension and hard work against odds in the background.

Swell letters from Myrtle and Pop Robbers, Frank Huffman, Mac McCall, John Dooley, and George (indoor) DeLaMater assure me that we have the brains, the interest, and the drive to do the job right.

I visited our Headquarters January 19th, meeting with Russ Nichols and Bryton Barron, our new Secretary – Treasurer. Miss Mae Simpson, watchdog of our finances, is right there pitching for us. For the second consecutive year our accounts are in the black. She has worked closely with our Headquarters staff to see that license applications go out the same day they are received. But even they can't send out licenses when the application is still tucked in the old gray sweater the Contest Director wore at that meet last August! And that happens all too frequently!



On May 23rd a group of AMA Leader members in and around New York gave a farewell luncheon for Lt. Cmdr. John Burton, USN, who is being transferred to Tokyo. At the same time a welcome was extended to Lt. Cmdr. Howard Eddy, USN, who has replaced Burton in the Navy PIO at the Pentagon and will carry on the Navy model program. Shown in the photo are: standing, left to right, Russ (what next?) Nichols, Cal (carrier deck) Smith, Ted (Mirror Meet) Clodius, George (PAA Load) Gardner, Frank (AMA prexy) Bushey, Al (Air Trails) Lewis, Bill (Air Trails - indoor) Tyler, and Matty (nylon) Sullivan; seated, Art (Mirror CD) Hasselbach, John (Tokyo) Burton, Bill (Model Airplane News) Winter, and Howard (what's a model airplane?) Eddy. Other luncheon guests not shown included Walter (Flying Models) Holze, Lou (Grumman) Barbetta, Bill (Berkeley) Effinger, and Bud Maher, formerly with the Navy. George Gardner arranged the luncheon. Irwin Dribben photo.

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Don Webster, new general manager of NAA, and Willis Brown, NAA vice president and first AMA president, long interested in our work, were most hospitable. As I reviewed with them the points of our present bylaws, they both gave us their blessings in rewriting our bylaws to satisfy our needs. I learned something more in talking with them and our Mae Simpson. These two years

in which we have ended with a balance are the first two in some time. In the past NAA balanced the books at the end of each year, *writing off* the definite. I had known that NAA footed the \$3000 we went behind in 1949 in supporting our Wakefield participation when Miss Simpson let me study the records but I didn't realize that deficits were chronic with us in past years. Russ tells me that the Nationals will be located on the West Coast – Los Alamitos, Calif. The 1953 Nationals should be on the East Coast and the 1954 Nationals will be near the center of the country.

There is a lot of talk going around about the builder-of-the-model rule. Some want to toss it out because it is difficult to enforce – or prove. What do you think about it? Some feel that when the contestant doesn't have to build the model he flies, he just isn't a modeler. But you are the fellows who make the rules. Ray Matthews sent out questionnaires for you to use in making rule change suggestions. I hope you sent yours in promptly.

As I said in my first message, this is *your* model organization. You are the guys who have to do the real thinking. Now we have the ball rolling, let's keep it going. Let's hear from Michigan, Florida, New Jersey, Idaho, Louisiana, and Kansas. Don't let my tenure of office be one in which a small handful dictates the policy all of us have to follow.

Sincerely,
Frank B. Bushey
Hartford, Conn.

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