



The AMA History Project Presents: History of the INTERNATIONAL GAS MODEL AIRPLANE ASSOCIATION



Started in 1936, absorbed by NAA in 1938

Written by NMAM staff (2011), Reformatted by JS (10/2018)

The National Model Aviation Museum (NMAM) [posted the following about the IGMAA](#) in their 2011 History Moments weekly postings for the AMA's 75th Anniversary celebrations.

Written by NMAM staff.

Week 2 - November 10, 2011: The attempt to ban the flying of gas models - 1937

“We Shall Not Scrap Our Gas Jobs...”

Read Charles H. Grant's call to arms for members of the International Gas Model Airplane Association (IGMAA), [Model Airplane News, August 1937, p 7](#).

The message was in response to the concerns that gas model flying would no longer be allowed. Registrar Frank Goodwin of Massachusetts ruled in 1937 that “gas powered models are legally aircraft and cannot be flown in the state of Massachusetts unless licensed and operated by licensed pilots.” (*Model Airplane News*, October 1937, p 28) Likewise, the Connecticut Commissioner of Aeronautics issued a regulation that “No model aircraft shall be flown in or over the State of Connecticut if powered by any means other than rubber bands. (*Model Airplane News*, November 1937, p 24) The United States Board of Commerce even began to investigate.

The IGMAA and its leaders along with the National Aeronautic Association and its model airplane division (the Academy of Model Aeronautics) lobbied for the benefits of gas model flying.

A delegation of Department of Commerce officials was brought to the 1937 National Aeromodeling Championships, after which they decided that gas models should not be banned and that restrictions placed upon the flying of gas jobs by the contestants themselves at the present time were sufficient.” (*Model Airplane News*, October 1937, p 18)

The actual authority of the IGMAA to make rules however was called into question, as it was sponsored by a commercial organization. To solve this issue, the IGMAA became a part of the NAA, as the Gas Model Division, and “Leaders in gas model building will be selected to sit upon a governing board in the Academy of Model Aeronautics. (*Model Airplane News*, February 1938, p 16-17) A “National Aeronautic Association Junior Membership News” article in [Model Airplane News, February 1938, page 24](#), outlined the program and encouraged IGMAA members, at a cost of \$1, to join the new division and receive a certificate attesting that they were an “early bird” and a pioneering member of the new division. Most importantly it also outlined the “Official Gas Model Fliers

Pledge” that all members needed to agree to.

With the establishment of the new division, the NAA promoted the value of aeromodeling, and criticisms, concerns, and attempted bans disappeared.

The IGMAA had been formed in 1936 by Grant, who was a gas model airplane enthusiast and also the editor of *Model Airplane News* magazine. As editor, Grant saw how gas models were becoming an important part of aeromodeling, from homebuilt engines to the prototype Brown Jr. engine that Maxwell Bassett used to win all 3 outdoor events at the 1933 National Aeromodeling Championships. (*Model Airplane News*, July 1933 p 22.) At the same time he also noticed the growing negative comments, and so in the [December 1935 issue of *Model Airplane News*](#) a questionnaire asked readers for their opinions on gas model aircraft. The responses he received encouraged him to create the IGMAA. He introduced a special feature article in *Model Airplane News*, “Gas Lines,” to highlight the activity of members and units.

The stated purpose of the IGMAA was “to promote the activity of gas model airplane building in all its phases and in this way provide intimate knowledge of airplane design and construction and motors so that young men may have a clear conception of problems of aviation before they undertake their life work in this field.” (*Model Airplane News*, April 1936, p 8)



International Gas Model Airplane Association lapel pin, issued to members beginning in February 1937. (Source: National Model Aviation Museum Collection, 2006.19.01a)

The following are scans of the front and back of a 1936 IGMAA gas model license. The original is stored in the National Model Aviation Museum Archives.

L FILL IN ALL BUT FIRST TWO ITEMS (RETURN)

International Gas Model Airplane Association
 OFFICIAL GAS MODEL PLANE LICENSE NO. I.G.M. Q-123-2

Assigned Walter Young Jr. Apr. 26

Name Philip Musa NUMBER OF PLANE
 Address 42 Oakdale Blvd. 1st..... 2nd...x.....
 City Farmingdale, L. I. 3rd..... 4th.....
 Class of Model to be registered... Class F 5th..... 6th.....
 Type " " " " Cabin Monoplane 7th..... 8th.....

Wing Span 62" Make of Engine Baby Cyclone Engine No. B-2792
 Date of First Flight none Approx. No. of Flights Made none
 Duration of Longest Flight Unofficial none Date Made.....
 Timed by I. G. M. A. A. Official none " ""

Date of Application: Signature Philip Musa
 Unit No. Witness Walter Young Jr.
 I.G.M.A.A. (Over)
 M 37-7-5

IMPORTANT

Fill in all blank lines in ink, except the following:—On slip marked A, the lines headed (ASSIGNED REGISTRATION NUMBER) and (DATE OF APPLICATION).

On slip marked L every line should be filled in except those marked (OFFICIAL MODEL PLANE LICENSE NO.), (ASSIGNED) and (DATE OF APPLICATION).

In the boxes on both slips, headed (NUMBER OF PLANE), check the number which corresponds with the building order number of the plane to be registered. If this is your second plane built, check 2nd, etc. Check only one number on each half slip.

Return both halves of slip to the head office of the I. G. M. A. A. Room 925, 551 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

If you belong to a unit, give its number in space marked for it. CLASS OF MODEL means N. A. A. Classification, such as Class "E"; which is any model having 300 square inches or more wing area. Smaller than these are Class "D" model.

TYPE OF MODEL means structural type (Give complete type, as PARASOL MONOPLANE).

Front of International Gas Model Airplane Association (IGMAA) gas model plane license, 1936 (Source: #0001 AMA Collection, National Model Aviation Museum)

Back of International Gas Model Airplane Association (IGMAA) gas model plane license, 1936 (Source: #0001 AMA Collection, National Model Aviation Museum)

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