



AMA President Dave Mathewson

# President's Perspective

## Help us? They did far too much as it was.

closest friends I have met through this sport of model aviation.

"One Friday in June of 2009 I had an experience with a model aircraft club that completely floored me! Let me explain. I have been the contest director for a helicopter contest in the Nashville, Tennessee, area for fourteen years. My regular flying field is within (and controlled by) one of the state parks. For thirteen of those years I have had no problem at all.

"Without going into detail, at 4:50 p.m., on the practice day (Friday), the parks department decided they would not allow us to use their field for a contest (as usual, we had all of the legal AMA paperwork and sanction) and told all of the pilots to leave the field or face a summons by the park police.

"I had folks that made ten-plus-hour drives to get here and I was one stressed CD. I called a modeling friend and let him know of our problem: a big bunch of world-class helicopter pilots with no place to fly!

"Robert Hughes (my friend) happened to be flying as a guest (the first time at this field in ten years) at the Middle Point Skyhawks' flying field a couple of towns over in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Jim Powers (president) overheard the conversation (remember, this is about 5:00 p.m. on a Friday) and offered to see if the members would have any problem with us moving the contest to their field. Within fifteen minutes, Jim and I were chatting and he got full support of the club for this.

"I was pretty much speechless; I didn't know these people from Adam and they are willing to shut down their nice weekend of flying so the field can be exclusively used by a bunch of helicopter pilots they don't even know. Well we all caravanned to the field Friday night and met up with Jim and began to mark out the field for our competition.

"I got home thinking that this cannot be true. Surely there will be irate members yelling at us in the morning about ruining their weekend of flying. I slept quite poorly, concerned that this was way too good to be true.

"Saturday was a very nice day (too nice to give up a flying field), and we got started.

About mid-morning, I caught a glimpse of someone walking toward me with a determined pace. Here we go (I thought), getting kicked off another field in the same weekend would be too much for me.

"No, this person, one of the club members, came to find me to shake my hand and welcome me there and let me know he was happy they could help. They even unlocked their doors to let us use their mower, paint, and grill, as well as any other items they had available.

"It sounds crazy but this went on all weekend, club members and officers, coming out for a few minutes, making sure we were all right and was there anything they could do to help us. Help us? They did far too much as it was.

"I want to offer my sincere appreciation to all of the members of the Middle Point Skyhawks. In all the years I have been enjoying this hobby, I have had so many positive experiences of people wanting to help. This experience has moved the bar high when it comes to hospitality and this club and its members should be recognized for helping out when it was not really the most timely or convenient thing to do.

"What the club members did not know at the time was that all of the monies from this event have been going to help support an after-school program in a low-income area of Nashville (through one of the churches). Without their help, we would have missed this year's contribution for the first time in fourteen years.

"Once again, thank you Skyhawks!"

On behalf of all of our members, I'd also like to extend our thanks and appreciation to the Skyhawks. As Tim wrote, the bar has been raised. *MA*

See you next time ...

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**A**MA's Education Committee chairman, Dr. Gordon Schimmel, has been selected as the recipient of the 2009 Dr. Mervin K. Strickler Jr. Aerospace Education Leadership Award presented by the National Coalition for Aviation Education (NCAE).

The award is presented annually by NCAE to recognize individuals who have made a personal commitment and lifelong contributions to aerospace education. Nominees and winners have been individuals who have demonstrated outstanding aviation and space education leadership through a noteworthy achievement and/or have made significant contributions to the aerospace field over a continuous period of time.

AMA is proud to have Dr. Schimmel serving as a member of our education team and I'd like to personally congratulate him on this outstanding achievement.

**We often talk** about how much more there is to model aviation and AMA than just flying model aircraft. We talk about the camaraderie and friendships that are made with others who share a common interest.

I recently received a letter from AMA member Tim DiPeri that I'd like to share with you. Tim's story clearly exemplifies the best of what model aviation and our organization have to offer.

"Extreme hospitality alive and well in Murfreesboro, Tennessee: I have been involved in model aviation most of my life and have been flying radio-controlled airplanes since 1973. I have had the fortunate experience of flying with, and meeting, some of the friendliest and helpful people I have ever met. In fact some of my

## Mission Statement

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.