

MODEL AERONAUTICAL
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.
N e w s l e t t e r
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56th Nationals – 2002/03

As noted in the last M.A.A.A. Newsletter, there was a possibility, that for the first time in the M.A.A.A.'s history, excluding the Second World War years, a year would pass without a National Championship.

Fortunately the Victorian Association, V.M.A.A., recently contacted the M.A.A.A. with an offer to host the 56th Nationals in Albury Wodonga over the period 28th December 2002 to 4th January 2003. The M.A.A.A. Executive had no hesitation in accepting the V.M.A.A. offer to again host the Nationals in Albury Wodonga. The tradition continues.

Many of you would realise that the 55th Nationals were also held in Albury Wodonga last Christmas. This is the first time that the Nationals have been held in the same location two years in a row. This will no doubt greatly assist the V.M.A.A. in the organisation of the event. Last year's was a great success with only good reports about the location and the organisation.

If you have never competed in a National Championship why not take up the challenge and have a go. I am sure you will have fun. You have about six month to get the model in order and put in some practice. Why not contact one of the many State or National Special Interest Groups for information about how to get going into the competition scene.

Information about the 56th Nationals will be posted on the M.A.A.A. web site, www.maaa.asn.au, in the very near future.

The Chairman of the organising Committee is Darry Gunst - dgunst@aol.com.au and the Registrar is Peter Harris - maaatec@ozemail.com.au

Membership Numbers

As the end of the 2001/2002 membership year draws close it is interesting to look at our membership figures.

I am pleased to report that we have had a slight, 1.7%, increase in membership over the 2000/2001 year. Over the year we attracted nearly 1600 new members to our great sport. This represents 16% of the membership. Juniors represented 25% of new members which is very pleasing as Juniors only make up 11% of the overall membership. This would indicate that we are increasing our junior membership percentage.

The disappointing part of the figures is that they indicate that 14.6% of our members did not rejoin after 2000/01. This actually lower than in previous year's but it is still quite high. If only we could get this number down and retain a higher percentage it would lead to a dramatic increase in members which has great benefits to the Association.

Without a survey it is very difficult to establish just why members are not rejoining. Perhaps they find it too difficult to learn, maybe too expensive or maybe they just get bored and move onto something different or maybe a combination. There are probably many reason why they leave. I guess the challenge for all of us is to try to identify these reasons and create an environment and sport that is so good they do not want to leave.

By far the best performance of all the states was Queensland where they had a 9.4% increase in membership. Well done. They were followed by NSW Free Flight with 2.6% then Victoria and C.L.A.S.(NSW Control Line) with a 2.2% increase. The majority of the other States either increased very marginally or suffered a slight decline in membership..

M.A.A.A.'s Secretary's Visit to Other Associations.

At the 2002 Council Conference it was decided to have the M.A.A.A. Secretary visit several National Model Associations on the way back from the FAI CIAM meeting in Switzerland. This was done with the view to learn about the way other organisations were run and identify possible improvements that could be adapted to the M.A.A.A.

I was able to arrange visits to one of the German Associations as well as the British, Canadian and US Associations.

I believe that it was an extremely beneficial experience for both the organisation and myself. During the meetings I was able to find out just how the associations were structured and ran. I also made numerous contacts with officers of the associations which have already been very helpful in obtaining information and assistance in other matters. It is amazing just how much more assistance you can obtain, and give, when you know the person who has sent the e-mail or letter.

All the associations I visited owned office buildings and operated out of them. The Canadian Association, M.A.A.C., is the most similar in numbers to M.A.A.A., have about 13,500 members, we have 9,800. They operate from their own two storey office building located in a light industrial area in a suburb of Toronto. It is staffed by 5 full time staff. The US association, AMA, have 170,000 members and 50 full time staff at their headquarters in Muncie on their 1,000 acre National flying site.

The four associations I visited have direct affiliation. This means that the National Association handles, among other things, all the fee collection, membership processing, sending out of membership cards and the publishing and distribution of the National Newsletter.

They also do not have a state based structure as we do. The country is divided into regions which are not state based. In the US there are several states in one region. In Canada their largest state is divided into several regions. This tries to have each of the regions with a similar number of members. In most cases each region has one representative on the Board of Directors of the Association.

The regions operate in a similar way to our state associations with respect to competitions and representatives on technical sub committees but as noted earlier do not collect fees. If they require funding for a particular project then they apply to the National body through their representative on the Board.

None of the associations I visited had any program in place to assisted clubs with field purchase/development loans. The Canadian Association President was very interested in our field purchase/development loans program and asked me to send him more details. He is very enthusiastic about it and intends to try to introduce a similar program into Canada.

The problem of losing flying fields is similar in all countries. I attended two club meeting in Canada where one was aware that the tenure on their current site was fast running out. I was asked to speak to the meeting about our field purchase program and the many ways clubs in Australia have managed to purchase flying fields.

I was extremely gratified at the end of the meeting when many of the members thanked me for enlightening them on the possibilities of how the purchase of a field could become a reality. They all seemed motivated to at least start looking into the possibility with a positive attitude.

All other associations have education programs. The British Association, for example, has a full time education officer who travels the country running programs and assisting Clubs to run programs. It was interesting that generally, they do not expect the children who attend the programs to immediately get into model aviation. They see it as a seed sowing exercise. They hope that the children had a very enjoyable and positive experience at the program and will, years later, recall the experience and venture into model aviation.

Many of the other associations participate in exhibitions and conventions such as science teachers conventions and hobby/sport shows promoting model aviation. In many cases they have to pay for the space, but see it as a vital part in the promotion of model aviation. The British association has had great success at the science teachers' conventions and has many schools actually purchasing their Delta Darts and other models they distribute as part of their education program.

I believe that the trip was extremely worthwhile and I learnt much from it. I am producing a report on the trip and will submit it to Council for their information and as an input into the Sub Committee looking at the MAAA Structure

Rules Book

The latest Australian Rules book is now on the M.A.A.A. Web site. The Rules can be down-loaded from the site and copies made if required.

At the 2002 M.A.A.A. Council Conference it was decided that the Rules Book would not be printed. It was considered that as most people have access to the Internet, if not personally then through a family member or friend, it is far more cost effective to leave it on the web site and those that need it can down load it. Some Special Interest Groups have indicated that they may print the relevant sections for their members. I suggest you contact your Special Interest Group if your are unable to down load a printed copy yourself.

Nominations for M.A.A.A. President and M.A.A.A. Technical Secretary

The current three year term of both the M.A.A.A. President and Technical Secretary conclude at the February 2003 M.A.A.A. Council Conference.

Therefore, nominations are called for these positions. The M.A.A.A.'s constitution, requires nominations in writing, signed by two Affiliate Members accompanied by the written consent of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the nomination) and shall be delivered to the Federal Secretary twelve weeks before the Meeting.

As the M.A.A.A. Council Meeting is to be held on February 22 and 23 2003, nominations are therefore to in by 29 November 2002. They should be sent to the M.A.A.A. Secretary. Please consider standing for either of these prestigious positions in the Association. If you required further details of either position please contact the M.A.A.A. Secretary.