

F2D News - December 2007

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Winter's finally here and out in full force. Although the weather might not be good for combat these days, the conditions seem to be right for everybody's second favorite event: mouth racing. Actually, there are a lot of things to discuss these days, so the timing is just right.

As many of you may know, long time AMA president Dave Brown is about to retire from his post. For those of you who have never had the chance to meet Dave, he is a very thoughtful and impressive man. He really took on a lot of responsibility as AMA president, and maybe most importantly for you and me, was a powerful advocate for our sport. In case you've had your head in the sand, the AMA is an organization primarily comprised of casual "sport" fliers. As "competition" fliers, we comprise a pretty small fraction of the total organization (even if we include radio control and free flight). As a result, there are many who feel that the amount of AMA funds directed towards competition-related resources is disproportionate to the contributions of competitive fliers to the organization. This article is not about the details of those arguments. However, as a long time competition flier himself, Dave Brown understands the needs of the competitive modeling community and has stood up for us many times.

Let me give just one example from my own experience with Dave that I believe demonstrates how lucky we've been to have him on our side. In 2004, the Control Line World Championships were held at the AMA Headquarters and Official Flying Site in Muncie, Indiana. How did this happen? It wasn't magic, and it didn't happen overnight. The decision was made years before hand. Because of his pride in the organization and his desire to represent the country and the AMA well to the rest of the world, Dave took it upon himself to thoroughly research what goes in to hosting a successful Control Line World Championships. To this end, he traveled with the US Team to the 2000 Control Line World Championships in Landres, France and observed all aspects of the competition with a keen eye. He also spent a lot of time talking with us, the fliers, mechanics, and supporters, to get as much information as he could. After returning to Muncie, Dave had a clear vision and helped organize a very successful World Champs in the US.

It is both sad and a little bit scary to see Dave go. To be honest, he will be a very tough act to follow, and I fear that we may lose some clout within the AMA in coming years. "Hmm, this sounds serious," you say. "But what can I do about it?"

Well, as one person it might be tough for you to have an impact. However, we have a group called MACA (the Miniature Aircraft Combat Association) which is an official AMA Special Interest Group for Control Line Combat. "Wow! That sounds sweet! What does it do?" MACA will do as much or as little as we put into it. With the impending turnover of AMA administration, MACA's role will be crucial in presenting a unified front for us, the control line combat community, to the AMA. Together we stand, divided we fall, right?

Recently I've been involved in some discussions about how to strengthen combat in the US and how to get more young fliers involved. The answer seems to always be that we should start by organizing these efforts through MACA. James McKinney put together a really great new MACA website this year, which you should all visit at: <http://www.maca.hobby-site.com:3535/>. This is a great resource, and should be the launching point for the new MACA. James has provided a forum section with room for experienced pilots to share their knowledge and offer all kinds of tips on building, flying, etc. for new pilots. Don't worry about giving away your secrets - if you don't share and we don't help new pilots get up to speed, there won't be anyone to fly against. There is no use hoarding information. Open exchange of ideas can only make us stronger as a whole. It might even force you to step your own flying up a notch to keep on top of your game, but that's a good thing! Just as with the entire organization, the website will only give back as much as we the community members put into it.

Let's take this as a starting point and rally together to put some weight back into MACA. We're going to need it in the coming years. Peace out.