



The AMA History Project Presents: History of the CASA GRANDE RC FLYERS (CGRC Flyers)



Written by NF and AMA staff (01/2013); Reformatted and edited by JS (01/2013); Updated by AF and JS (02/2013, 03/2017)

The following article was written by Nancy Friedman and submitted to the AMA History Project in early February 2013. For more information about the Casa Grande RC Flyers, visit their website at www.CasaGrandeRCFlyers.com.

In the fall of 2011, two residents of Casa Grande made a request of the Parks and Recreation Department for a radio controlled air field in a city park north of Casa Grande. Due to concerns of noise for neighboring houses, injury and liability issues, and the close proximity to the Casa Grande airport, the Parks Department opposed the establishment of the field.

Following up on an alternative site mentioned at the Parks and Recreation meeting, members of the two largest private RC clubs in the area organized a club which would allow all valley RC flyers to join together in their love of RC flying unfettered by residency requirements. This club, called the Casa Grande RC Flyers (CGRC Flyers), had a membership drive in June and accumulated approximately 70 members. A Board of four officers was appointed with Alan Friedman as President, Richard Beck as Vice President, Craig Rice as Treasurer, and Ron St. Pierre as Secretary. This board organized another presentation for the Parks and Recreation Department which included a video from the Oro Valley club and a visit to the Robson Ranch airfield. Although the Parks and Recreation Department thought the use of the land near the shooting range at Casa Grande Mountain would be a good site for the new RC field, the Mayor and City Manager rejected the site because it felt there was not enough land causing an infringement on neighboring lands not owned by the city and the local Trap and Skeet club.

Not to be detoured, Alan Friedman contacted the head of the Trap and Skeet club and the Chamber of Commerce. Having had previous experience with neighboring shooting and RC flying clubs in Colorado, the head of the local Trap and Skeet club had no problem with the establishment of a neighboring flying field in Casa Grande. It was pointed out to the Chamber President, the CGRC flying club would hold events to which the public would be invited and would also help other clubs/churches with fundraising at those events plus teach young flyers, such as the Boy Scouts, how to fly. An email to all the members of the CGRC Flyers was sent encouraging them to write to their city councilman asking them to reconsider a field for their club. The numerous emails received by the Mayor and city council members from the club's membership caused the issue of an RC flying field to gain life again. A meeting was again requested by Mr. Friedman, with the Mayor and City Manager. They agreed to meet. At the meeting, the Mayor and City Manager expressed their real concerns of liability and fire. Mr. Friedman addressed both those concerns by explaining that only AMA members could use the field, since their membership included liability insurance. The city officials warmed to the idea but wanted to discuss the terms of a lease, field design and other safety issues. It was determined by making the club a non-profit corporation and having the club obtain the AMA's field insurance, the city could then lease the land to the club and avoid liability. In October 2012, the AMA authorized funding for the Casa Grande RC Flyers to become a non-profit incorporated

entity. The survey of the land was completed and what was thought to be only 2.8 acres of land for the airfield was indeed almost 11 acres.

When all the paperwork was completed for the incorporation of the CGRC Flyers, the proposed lease of the 11 acres was requested of the city council at its December 17, 2012 meeting. The only question asked at that City Council meeting of the President of the Casa Grande RC Flyers, Alan Friedman, was if AMA membership was required to fly at the field. He explained the requirement of membership in the AMA was how the field and membership would be insured for liability purposes. No other questions were asked, but instead comments were made praising the fortitude with which this project continued over so many months and “the wonderful collaboration between the private and public sector” to finalize the establishment of the airfield. It was stated usually there was only a request of the city council for help, but nothing in return for the council or city. However, in this case, the club was going to host public events and would teach others to fly such as local Boy Scout troops.

One more reading of the request for the establishment of the field was read and approved at the January 7, 2013, meeting. The official lease was signed on January 22, 2013 for the sum of one dollar a year for up to eight years with a renewable clause. A meeting of the community service director, public works director, and board members of the CGRC Flyer club was held on February 1, 2013 to discuss what the city was going to do for the final preparation of the airfield site and its completion date. The final completion date was estimated to be February 22, 2013.



CGRC Flyers leadership (Left to right): Richard Beck, Vice President, Ron St Pierre, Secretary, Craig Rice, Treasurer, Alan Friedman, President (Photo courtesy Alan Friedman)



Craig Rice, Treasurer (left) and Ron St Pierre, Secretary, (Photo courtesy Alan Friedman)



Craig Rice, Club Treasurer (Photo courtesy Alan Friedman)



CGRC Flyers at the field. (Photo courtesy Alan Friedman)



February 21, 2013: CGRC Flyers' RC field being built. (Photo courtesy Alan Friedman.)



February 21, 2013: CGRC Flyers' RC field being built. (Photo courtesy Alan Friedman.)

The following article was posted by AMA staff on January 29, 2013 on the AMA Clubs Blog.

Casa Grande RC Flyers Field Approved!

January 7, 2013 was an exciting day for the Casa Grande RC Flyers. They learned that their ordinance for leasing of land, originally provided to the Casa Grande, Arizona council on Monday December 17, 2012, had not only been approved, but that the city wanted to provide the club with 11 acres of usable field, opposed to the 2.8 acres originally requested.

The city council members praised the club for their efforts in advancing this project, calling it “a wonderful collaboration between the private and public sector”. The city’s Community Services Director, Bill Schwind, pointed out the possible economic value to the city by approving the arrangement. The City of Casa Grande will put in thousands of dollars in site improvements, including a land survey, runway, access road, and parking areas to get the site ready. Leaders

believe the investment will pay off as the club will bring in visitors and provide fun activities for residents with their open events, air shows, fun fly contests, pilot instruction, and swap meets.

The ten-month effort has truly paid off for the club members, who are recruiting others to join the club. Dues will be \$25.00 per year, and each member of the club will be given access to the locked field gate. The funds from dues would be used to pay for field tables, fencing, a wind sock, entry gate and locks, signs, plus all other field items and supplies. Members of other AMA clubs will be allowed to attend club events but will be charged an entrance fee or “landing fee” to use the private facilities.

Although member dues will help with expected costs, the club still has several items they need for club operations, which begin when the field opens in late February or early March. They are asking for donations to cover the cost of the tables and other needed items. Any donation would be appreciated, but amounts of \$25.00 or more would be considered as first year annual dues. Anyone interested in supporting the club can send checks payable to the “Casa Grande RC Flyers, Inc.” to: Alan Friedman (President), 5309 N Pioneer Drive, Eloy, Arizona 85131. You can also email to Alan at PoorAlan@aol.com. Please include your name, AMA number, and a stamped self-addressed return envelope so that they can return your membership card and field gate access code. Any amount would be appreciated, but gate access and membership card will require \$25.00 (or more).

An online article about the club, posted February 9, 2017 by the Casa Grande Dispatch, can be found [here](#). This can also be read on the AMA Clubs Blog page [here](#).

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