

## 1.0 Introduction and Overview

This Guide addresses many questions new or prospective authors frequently ask about writing for AMM.<sup>1</sup> Experienced authors will be familiar with much of this information, but AMM's editorial focus and objectives and expectations for rights and payments differ enough from other magazines that they should read this information thoroughly, too.

To help you find the answers you need, the rest of this Guide is organized in major sections:

- Section 2. *AMM* Goals and Concept and Frequently Asked Questions.
- Section 3. Data Formats and File Transfer.
- Section 4. Shipping, Mailing, and Acknowledgment.
- Section 5. Doing business with *AMM*.

***Please read this and our other guides before engaging me in speculation about projects you have in mind.*** Geoff and I simply don't have time to repeat all of this information over the phone or by e-mail.

- The ***AMM Feature Article Author's Guide*** (this guide) describes our editorial goals and doing business with *AMM*.
- ***Writing Feature Articles 101*** is about the nuts and bolts of writing articles, including integrating photos, graphics, and captions into your text.
- Modeling articles are built around photos and graphics and captions. Read the ***AMM Digital Photography Guide*** to see what I expect technically from your photos and graphics.
- Kit reviews are a special kind of short, structured, narrowly-focused article. The ***AMM Kit Reviewer's Guide*** provides further insight into *AMM*'s editorial focus and tone.
- The ***AMM Kit Reviewer's Template*** serves as a checklist for gathering and presenting valuable information about the kit under review. It's also valuable for feature articles.
- The draft ***Letter Contract / Invoice*** will prepare you to negotiate sale and assignment of your work.

## 2.0 *AMM* Goals and Concept and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

My top-level **goals** for *AMM* are straightforward.

- I want *AMM* readers to be well-informed, inspired to pursue creativity and excellence in their craft, and encouraged to enjoy their hobby.
- I want to thoroughly cover American subjects and other subjects that strongly interest an American modeling audience. That DOES NOT mean we only cover American subjects! We have no hard-and-fast restrictions or preferences on scale, era, or level of complexity of projects.
- I want *AMM* to be the best, highest-value scale aircraft modeling periodical you can buy.
- I want *AMM* to be a readily accessible venue for model builders and authors to showcase their work.

The **concept** for *AMM* is simple and reflects these goals.

- We'll give *AMM* readers more useful information and inspiration per page and per dollar than any other modeling magazine they can buy.
- We'll earn readers' respect for editorial restraint and focus.
- We'll achieve the same production values you see in the best European model magazines.

I can sum up my intentions and expectations by answering some specific and Frequently Asked Questions.

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this guide has lots of philosophy and motivational ideas. Contact me via the *AMM* website and I'll send it to you if you think you have time to read it.

**FAQ: What kinds of subjects and topics do I want to cover in AMM?**

I want AMM to appeal strongly to an American audience. AMM covers WW2 European subjects, too, but AMM focuses on covering more uniquely American topics and more American adversaries than have traditionally been covered by the European modeling press. For example, I want...

- More USAAC and USN and USMC from WW2 -- and not just ETO P-51s and P-47s -- and more Japanese and Russian WW2 subjects
- More US and Russian jets, both in their original markings and also in those of their clients (NATO, SEATO, Warsaw Pact, Arab states, etc.) and combatants in modern conflicts (Israel, Iraq, etc.)
- More X-planes, experimental types and prototypes, and black jets
- More subjects from Korea and Vietnam and more *Century Series* and *Nifty Fifties NAVAIR*
- More American trainers and biplanes
- More American civil, sport, and racing subjects, more helicopters, and more real space subjects

I want AMM to reflect more than my limited tastes and interests. Only by including other authors and their interests will AMM achieve the breadth and depth of topical coverage required to inspire, inform, and encourage. Instead of listing my preferences, I'd rather find out what you're excited about and what you want to do for AMM. If you're excited about it, you'll communicate that naturally to the people who read your work.

**FAQ: What am I looking for in a feature article?**

We have very high expectations for feature articles. For that reason, we often build teams to cover a particular subject. One or more persons may:

- Build the model and take the photos to document assembly and finishing.
- Gather period photos from museums, archives, or private collections.
- Take detail photos of the real airplane in service or at museums.
- Write a technical and historical introduction on the airplane.
- Provide color profiles or technical drawings.

This team approach lets each person focus on what they do and enjoy best, without being slowed down by things that others may do better. Don't be surprised if we combine your work with that from other contributors.

**Feature articles should tell a complete story.** For that reason, feature articles may require multiple parts published over several issues. Feel free to propose such ambitious projects and the composition of the team required to execute it. If you only want to do a single-part article, that's fine. If you believe you can do all this yourself, don't be afraid to try. We'll support you in any way we can.

On the other hand, every article doesn't have to have all of these features. I want to publish a wide variety of articles of various lengths, kit and product reviews, and smaller items (e.g., photos of your models, photos from museums or air shows, hints and tips, letters and questions, etc.) to meet our readers' needs.

**Feature-length articles should inspire people to tackle worthwhile projects with excellence and panache.**

They should encourage people take chances and overcome the temptation of "defensive modeling." I'm looking for articles about good -- even great -- models, but I'm not looking for IPMS National Contest winners per se. Conversions, modifications and unusual configurations, special paint schemes, interesting historical contexts, special displays, extensive aftermarket or scratch-built improvements, etc., all add interest and encourage people to try new things. Excellence, creativity, and daring speak for themselves, so if you've got it, flaunt it.

**Feature length modeling articles must have adequate in-progress photo coverage to show the readers HOW you did WHAT you did.** In general, we won't publish articles without this feature.

**Feature length articles should showcase some unique technique, material, or tool in the context of the project.** Pick one or two things that you do well and that make your modeling more fun, more effective, more competitive, faster, or more enjoyable -- and tell us about them. I want more than just a few photos of the finished model: I want the encouragement that comes from seeing a pile of parts -- the same pile of parts that I have -- turned into a great model, and I want to see how you did it. If you're only trying to document assembly and finishing of the model pretty much straight from the box, we'll probably consider re-packaging your work as a review.

***I want to give people valuable information on the kits they are buying and building.*** Why did you choose one particular kit over another? Where were the trouble spots and how did you fix them? Evaluate the aftermarket products you used. Did they fit? Are they accurate? Do they make your model more realistic? How hard were they to use? Were they worth the time, effort, and money?

***I'm looking for a positive, constructive attitude.*** One thing that separates print magazines from web forums is editorial deliberation and restraint. What we say is important, and we'll take our time and say it right. If you run your ideas and words through the filter of "inspiring, informing, and encouraging people to tackle worthwhile projects with excellence and panache," you'll be OK. Don't take uncivil or unconstructive potshots at other people's work or products or kits. Tell us how to overcome challenges, not complain about them. Appreciate what a kit or product is -- don't criticize what it's not.

#### **FAQ: How will we work together to create your article?**

I want AMM to be the first place you think about when trying to sell your work. That means that I have to offer you some combination of top-flight compensation, impeccably fair dealing and treatment as an artist and author and collaborator, and a sense that you're associated with a top-flight magazine.

I've been as forthright as I can be about AMM's editorial focus. My immediate objective is to find some subject that you're excited about and that you're motivated to get done quickly with the quality I expect and that you expect of yourself. I'm counting on the fact that you're motivated by the subject and the project and that your motivation will get you through building the model, learning to work with me, and getting the article written. Having said that, I focus on results, and I won't "push a rope." We don't put deadlines on our authors. You either do the work because you want to, or you don't. I may get excited about what you're working on, but I don't count on your article or put in on our schedule until I have a solid draft in hand.

Once you identify a concept for an article or project, you might send me an outline or storyboard or some pictures that describe your concept so that I can give you informal but specific feedback. I'm glad to provide such feedback whenever you ask for it, but I need something solid to work with. During these early discussions, I may respond to you with words like, "I'm interested in that" or "Your project would fit in with what I'm trying to accomplish." Please don't mistake those statements as a commitment or a solicitation or an offer to do business. I'm just trying to keep the conversation going until we have something concrete to work with.

To really take the process to some concrete level, you have to send me something that looks like a draft (or storyboard) of an article.<sup>2</sup> Adequate text and pictures must be arranged in some order to tell your story. To keep the conversation going, I may even mark your draft up for you. (If we can't come to terms for buying and selling your work, you're free to take my preliminary editorial work and use it elsewhere.)

Once I buy your work, I'll continue to work hard to make you look good as a builder and an author. To that end, I'll try to keep you informed of any editorial changes I make to your work. I'll run drafts by you for comment, and I expect you to respond in a timely fashion. So far, the general response has been that I treat authors pretty well, but you have several options if you don't like what I do with your work after I've paid for it.

- You can suggest changes, which I may or may not implement.
- You can offer to buy your work back.
- You can ask to have your name removed from the work.
- You can ask me to include a statement that, although I started with your work, I changed it considerably more than you intended.

#### **FAQ: How will you be paid for feature articles?**

AMM doesn't have a "scale" for paying authors. Before I talk about other factors that do affect how much we pay, I'll give two compelling reasons for why we don't use a scale. One affects you, and the other affects me. Both adversely affect quality.

- If I paid you by the page or by the word, you'd write more words than you need to tell the story. Your text would tend toward wordiness, which makes the story hard to read and consequently less enjoyable for AMM's readers.

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<sup>2</sup> I accept draft articles for review and comment and consideration only. See the **Letter Contract / Invoice**.

- Likewise, if I paid you by the page or by the word, I'd be motivated to chop your work up and keep it as short as possible. Inevitably, I'd corrupt the organization and flow of your ideas and make you look like you don't know how to build a model or write an article. Again, that would make the articles less fun to read, and it would really aggravate you.

Instead of using a scale, I consider the following when negotiating a price with you.

- ***Does your topic appeal strongly to an American audience?*** Americans generally have pretty broad interests, so this is not too hard. On the other hand, we want to cover those uniquely American subjects that may not be adequately covered elsewhere.
- ***How hard do I have to work to make your work ready for press?***
  - That might depend on how much experience you have writing articles in general and how much experience you have with AMM in particular. I tend to offer "rookies" that I have to train less, but you'll find that as we build an amicable and professional working relationship, I tend to pay more.
  - You have to strike a balance between doing as much of the work as you can and getting the work ready in time for me to use it. I can't give you a rule to follow in making that judgment, but I always want to err on the side of actually having something finished. If in doubt, call me and let's get the right answer together -- and quickly.
- ***Does your text follow these guidelines? Is it consistent with AMM's editorial focus?***
  - Does it properly document the project with a balance of photos and text?
  - Does it showcase some new technique, material, or tool in the context of the article?
  - Do you follow the guidelines published here for organization, grammar, and formats?
- ***Are the graphics and captions able to stand alone to tell the story?***
  - Have you given me high quality images? Are the images properly illuminated, exposed, focused, framed, and cropped? Do they have adequate resolution and size?
  - Are the images digital or hard copy? Do I have to spend most of a day scanning things in? Are hard copy images large enough to scan properly?
  - Do captions follow the guidelines given here? Are images and captions properly correlated? Are photo callouts in the text properly correlated to images and captions?
- ***Are you providing more than one aspect of the article (e.g. built model and photos, color profiles, period photos, etc.)? Do other people helping create this article have to be paid, too?***
- ***Are you selling me the rights I've requested? This is very important!***
  - Your work is still yours until I buy it from you, but once I buy it, it's mine and I want exclusive, unlimited, worldwide rights to it. If you're selling something less than that, I may offer less than I would for more comprehensive rights. If you've already posted your stuff on the internet, you've already given some of its value away for free to others, and it's worth less to me than it would have been otherwise. I have an obligation to AMM's readers to give them good value, and charging them for material they can get for free off the internet runs counter to that.
  - Having said that, we routinely purchase less than exclusive, unlimited, worldwide rights. For example, we may not get exclusive rights for photos that an author intends to include in a book. Likewise, we may agree not to resell profile artwork for decal production, which has been reserved to the artist. We're willing to discuss more limited rights.
  - I may need to swap an AMM article (that you wrote but which I paid for) for articles in foreign language magazines. I need the freedom to do that directly and expeditiously and without referring back to you for permission. In addition to what we paid for articles used in AMM, I'll pay you what I consider a reasonable commission if I use your work for such a swap. I'll also do what I can to make sure you're properly credited for your work.

I want to make sure you're adequately compensated. Document expenses for buying or copying historical photos (and I encourage you to buy photos if that would help make your article more effective) or other materials that are above and beyond what would normally be included in the price of an article. We'll consider that in formulating an offer.

In general, and regardless of your past accomplishments, AMM does not solicit or commission work or pay up front for articles from people who have not worked with us before. (You can always ask, though. Just don't be offended if I say no.) I want to see the finished product or at least a solid draft. If I like it, I'll pay for it and work with you to make it suitable.

To be paid, you must sign and return to us the Letter Contract / Invoice for your work. At this point, we pay for articles as they're being sent to lay-up, but we're transitioning to paying as your article is posted to our "next 6 issues" planning calendar.

**FAQ: How will we get this done?**

We need to keep things in perspective. *AMM* is a business, but it's a business about a hobby. If you're not (and if I'm not) having fun with it, something is wrong. Deadlines are important, but we'll kill all the fun and excitement if you're just doing this for the money or trying to meet some deadline for me.

To mitigate that kind of pressure, I want to build a large corps of contributors and reviewers and establish a steady flow of articles and reviews. That means that the editorial staff works to deadlines, but we never push our authors to work to a deadline. If your work is ready, we'll use it. Otherwise, we'll use something else.

For *AMM* to succeed, I need competent, dependable authors and reviewers. The numbers are straightforward. If we publish 4 issues a year with 4 to 6 feature-length articles in each issue, I need at least 20 top-quality articles per year. If we have 8 to 10 timely, comprehensive kit or product reviews in each issue, I need at least 40 product reviews for the first year alone. Those numbers will go up when we ramp up to six issues per year. My goal is to find 20 people who can write one feature article a year and another 20 people who can write a feature article every other year. I want to spread the workload and stress (and enjoyment and remuneration) around as much as possible to keep the workload from being too heavy on any one person.

This is very much a team effort, and I need your help and participation. I can build and write pretty well, but I can't build or write it all. I'm one of the best technical editors I know, and I can do a lot to help you produce your articles (including providing these pamphlets). My long-term vision is to build a virtual staff of researchers, photographers, graphic artists, etc., who can help you build your articles better and faster than you could working all by yourself.

### 3.0 Data Formats and File Transfer

Our editorial and layout processes are PC based. Our primary software tools are:

- **Microsoft Office Professional 2003**
  - Word
  - PowerPoint
  - Excel
- **Adobe Creative Suite Premium 3**
  - InDesign
  - Illustrator
  - PhotoShop
  - Acrobat

We'll work with your data in whatever format you send it, but some things make the job easier for us.

- If you use a Mac, convert all files to something we can use on our PCs before you send them to us. We have fits with Apple's feature that allows you to use the same filename for more than one file. It's a real time waster for us, and it greatly increases the risk that we might lose one of your files. Please make sure each and every file has a unique name.
- Text or word processing files should be compatible with MS *Word 2003*. If you're using MSWord 2007, save your files accordingly to make them backwards compatible. We prefer .DOC files. We may be able to use an Optical Character Reader to convert hand-written or typed text to soft copy files, but that's a lot of extra work for us.
- Photos should be TIF files, but we can work with JPEGs under certain conditions (e.g., high resolution, saved at largest file size or highest image quality, etc.). All photo images must be compatible with Adobe *PhotoShop*. See the ***Digital Photography Guide*** for comprehensive guidance on creating and sending digital images.
- Graphics should be compatible with Adobe *Illustrator*.

You can send us a proposal or unsolicited submission as a PDF for review, but if I buy it or if you ask for my help in editing it, I'll want a version in some other format that is easier to edit.

You have some options for sending files to us.

- Send soft copy text and image files on a CD (and any hardcopy media) via US Mail (we suggest certified return receipt) or receipted carriers like Fedex or UPS. You may use more than one CD, if needed, and you may put text and photos on the same CD. Identify all CDs with your contact info, article or subject name, and an item number (e.g., “#2 of 4 total,” etc.). Please include a packing list. Please send us a short e-mail to make us aware that your package is on the way.
- Contact us via the AMM website for File Transfer Protocol (FTP) instructions and passwords. **DO NOT send TIF files via e-mail. They’re too big.**

## 4.0 Shipping, Mailing, and Acknowledgment

To reduce confusion and to do business in a professional manner, we insist on the following:

- Unsolicited submissions of packages sent via postal or shipping services must be properly and securely packaged and must include a complete packing list.
- All unsolicited submissions (postal or electronic) must clearly state name and contact information (mailing or PO address, daytime phone number, e-mail address if available) of a sole, responsible author or contributor, even if other collaborators or co-authors are credited in the work.
- All unsolicited materials received via postal or shipping services and which do not include sufficient return postage, adequate packaging and mailing materials, and adequate return addresses become the property of *AMM* upon receipt.
- In the event we find the material unsuitable for *AMM*, it is our policy to return unsolicited submissions and materials received via postal or shipping services within 90 days of receipt, provided that sufficient return postage, adequate packaging and mailing materials, and a legible and correct return address are provided with the package. Submissions and materials received via the internet that are found by *AMM* to be unsuitable will be deleted from our systems after 90 days or as soon as discussions with the contributor are concluded.
- It is our policy to promptly acknowledge receipt of unsolicited submissions or packages received via postal or shipping services, but we can do that only if a stamped, self-addressed post card or envelope or an e-mail address is provided. It is our policy to acknowledge unsolicited submissions received via the internet or e-mail by e-mail as soon as they are received.
- It is our policy to promptly review and evaluate all submissions and respond to contributors regarding our evaluation within 90 days of receipt. Submissions must remain exclusive to *AMM* until either *AMM* or the contributor indicates to the other in writing that discussions are terminated.

## 5.0 Doing Business with *AMM* -- Contracts and Rights

At some point, our money and your intellectual property are going to change hands. To protect both of us, we need a contract. The boilerplate for the **Letter Contract / Invoice** is provided in a separate file on the website. You should read it. It basically assigns (usually unlimited, exclusive, and worldwide) rights to your article to us in consideration of our paying you and your certification that the material is yours to sell. Please note that the terms in the boilerplate contract are just a starting point for discussion: if we’re mutually agreed, they can be altered to suit your circumstances.

**To receive payment, authors and contributors must submit the signed Letter Contract / Invoice.** We can pay you as an individual or we can pay your company if you’re incorporated. We’ll need either your Social Security Number or your company’s tax ID number.

Although we encourage and gladly receive freelance and unsolicited submissions, they are accepted by *AMM* for review and consideration only. All submissions, regardless of size or length, must be submitted exclusively to *AMM* for consideration. We’ll discuss our interests and provide preliminary feedback on any concepts you might have in mind. *AMM* is generally not interested in and will not accept or pay for any work that has been submitted in whole or in part to any other venue, forum, or publisher (including free or paid venues on the internet) for consideration, publication, or payment. *AMM* makes no offer or guarantee to authors or contributors to pay for or publish any, all, or part of unsolicited submissions.

Some articles and submissions will be complete and ready for publication in *AMM* just as you have submitted them, and a letter contract / invoice for sale to *AMM* can be processed quickly. Other articles and submissions

may require editorial revision, suggestions for changes in focus or scope, or augmentation with material from other sources, etc. At our sole discretion, we may provide support to contributors until both you and we are ready to enter a contract for sale of the article to *AMM*. Once negotiations result in a data package and in terms and conditions for sale that are mutually agreeable, we'll prepare a simple letter contract / invoice for your use.

We can't anticipate every eventuality, and this summary is no substitute for the terms and conditions in the contract, but here are some examples:

- If you post your uncopyrighted text or images on the internet, then, to some extent, you have already given it away and you CANNOT offer or sell it to *AMM* for exclusive and unlimited use at full price.
- If you submit your own copyrighted work to us, you must be willing to sell us exclusive and unlimited rights to it or be willing to negotiate adequate limited rights to meet our needs.
- If you submit somebody else's copyrighted work, you must have permission in writing from the copyright holder to sell us unlimited rights to it. We'll want a copy of that permission.
- If you submit an article to any other magazine, DO NOT submit all or part of the same article to *AMM* until the other guys have told you in writing that they have no interest in it. If you submit an article to *AMM*, DO NOT submit all or part of it to anybody else anywhere until after you withdraw it from us in writing or we tell you in writing that we have no interest in it.
- If we like what you sent us, we may offer to buy it. Once we buy it, no one else has the right to use it. Once we buy it, we have the right to use it everywhere we can or not use it all. We can chop it up or alter it or add to it as we see fit. Once we buy it, we have the right to resell it or trade it. But if you can write one article for *AMM*, you can probably write a lot for *AMM*, so it is in our best interest to keep you happy, and we will try hard to do so. If we substantially alter your work, we'll ask you whether you want your name on the finished product or we might add a statement that, although we started with what we bought from you, we changed it a lot more than you liked.
- We'll keep whatever you send us through postal or shipping services, unless we decide we have no interest in it and you provide postage and packing materials to send it back and a return address. If we buy something from you, we'll keep all of it and we won't send any of it back. So please DO NOT send us irreplaceable originals. Make high-quality hard or soft copies suitable for our use in putting the magazine together and send that instead.
- Don't violate the National Security Act. DO NOT send us classified information or information that is marked FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.
- Don't put your day job (or your friends' day jobs or our magazine) at risk. DO NOT send us proprietary information of stuff you ripped off at work. Get it released properly.