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Model Planes, Fastest-Growing U.S. Hobby, is a \$2,500,000 Business

Twenty-five years ago, the few American youngsters who built model airplanes fashioned their flying machines of balsa wood and a strong rubber band. Today 2,000,000 Americans build and fly model planes. Most of them are still in the balsa-and-rubber-band stage but there are 35,000 who are serious students of aerodynamics. Their models are amazingly realistic. Powered with gasoline motors, they have wingspreads up to 14 feet, can stay in the air for almost an hour. Model makers insist that theirs is the fastest growing U.S. hobby. The business of supplying a model demands runs up to \$2,500, 000 a year.

On April 24, 1938, a gusty Sunday, 300 gas-model owners from five states trundled their ships out to Seversky Airport at Farmingdale, Long Island, New York for the annual Eastern States Championships. Every contestant had a license, issued by the National Aeronautic Association under supervision of the Federal Government. No one may legally fly a gasoline plane in the U.S. without an N.A.A. license and full licenses are not given to people under 16. The meet was won by Edmund Seemuller of the Bronx whose plane glided for three minutes, 37 seconds, after the motor was cut.

The Eastern States Championships were a preliminary to the National meet coming to Detroit, Michigan on July 6-9. More than 1,000 boys are expected to bring their planes. Big feature of the Nationals will be a contest among radio-controlled models-so far model building has progressed. But as yet few boys own radio-controlled planes. They cost more than \$100 to build.