



Vol. 2, No. 4

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April-May, 2011

Hi everybody and welcome to another edition of the newsletter. A lot has gone on since our last meeting. We've made some progress and headway on our show preparations, and, of course, the big news over the last month has been the AMPS International Show up in Fredericksburg, VA.

Both Dave Varettoni and I attended, and I can say with no qualifications – Wow! What a show! The international show had over 500 of the best armor models east of the Mississippi river (with a few thrown in from as far away as Europe). Dozens of vendors occupied, I think, about 100 vendor tables. There were numerous seminars given by some of the most well-known names in the hobby, including Steve Zaloga, Tom Jentz, and Mig Jimenez, and even though I missed them both, there were two great tours – one to the USMC museum and one to the Virginia Museum of Military Vehicles. Like I said, what a show!

Both Dave and I pulled many judging shifts "in the pits," and between us, we probably put in about a total of about 14 hours in direct show support. So, AMPS Central SC did its little part to keep the ball rolling. We also did middling well in the competition side of things, too, so, while they might not of known who we were before the show started, but by the end of it, I think there were a few folks who were noticing that the "Carolina Boys" were in town.

Next year's AMPS International show will be held in late April in Auburn, Indiana, home of the WW2 Victory Museum. I know I'm already trying to figure out how I can work out a reasonable itinerary to get to that show, too. Anyone who's interested, let me know. Maybe we can coordinate our plans.

Since our last meeting, both Tim Darrah and Scott Amey have been busy selling vendor tables and soliciting for trophy sponsorships. (At last count, Scott had solicited about \$180 worth of trophy sponsorships, covering all of our special awards! Great job Scott!)

Tim's made a good start on selling our share of the vendor tables, and hopefully he'll be able to make the next meeting and give us an up-date. On the subject of raffles, please don't miss Tim's open letter to the membership near the end of this newsletter.

We've already gotten a couple of very nice raffle donations from club members (thanks, Keith!), but I don't want to steal Tim's thunder and will let him tell everyone about those.

Finally, we have received the AMPS medals (gold, silver, and bronze) for the field awards from the national organization, so we owe a big thanks to our fellow AMPS members for covering our backs on our first show.

For those of you who haven't joined AMPS yet, here's a good reason for you to do so and show your support and appreciation for the national organization that's backing us up.

Yer'umble servant,

Mike

Last Meeting Minutes:

Our last meeting was a quite one with modest attendance. We discussed quite a bit of show information and the results of the special coordination meeting. We had a couple of visitors from the SCMA Chapter, Glenn Jeffcoat and David Sanders. They came by to see what we're all about, and hopefully we'll see more of them. Both David and Glenn are the core of the SCMA chapter's contest committee and are our liaisons with the SCMA guys for contest matters. Scott Amey volunteered to solicit for trophy sponsors, and Tom Wingate volunteered to place some contest flyers in the New Brooklyn Model RR Shop.

Photos of Models at Last Meeting:

Since we now have a website up and running, we also have a special page where we'll post the photos from the meetings. So, for those of you (and me!) who miss a meeting, now you won't have to wait all month to see what went on at the last meeting model-wise. Check it out!

Next Meeting Agenda:

Next meeting is scheduled for 6:00 pm Wednesday, 13 April, 2011.

Meetings are held on 2nd Wednesdays at the HobbyTown USA store, 10120 Two Notch Road, Suite 5, Columbia, SC 29223, (803) 736-0959.

6:00 pm: Meeting starts / Admin Business / Raffle Tickets: We will also discuss the latest information on the contest plans.

6:30 pm: Show & Tell: Builds and WIP's

6:50 pm: 20-min Break / Shopping / Mixer

7:10 pm: Reconvene / Draw for the Raffle / Continue: Show & Tell: Builds and WIP's

8:00 pm: Meeting ends (officially – but we'll carry-on as long as the store will stay open)

Classified Ads:

Send your requests for assistance with references, help or advice resolving building and finishing problems, or needed "bits and bobs" for your latest project to the editor for inclusion in the next newsletter.

If you can help out your fellow club members, please bring what you have to the next meeting. If you think that you could present your method or technique to solve a problem or accomplish a building or finishing task to the entire group, let the editor know. Maybe we can organize your info into a demo for general presentation and add it to the following meeting's agenda (or an extemporaneous presentation at the next meeting).

Research Assistance / Info Needs: No requests this month.

Construction / Building / Finishing Problems that Need Help / Advice: None.

Parts-Swap Needs: None

Up-coming Events of Interest:

April 13, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

April 22-23, 2011, IPMS Spartanburg, SC Contest.

May 11, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

May 14, 2011: IPMS Region 12 Convention, Raleigh, NC.

June 8, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

July 13, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

July 16, 2011: Our Inaugural Contest, jointly-hosted with the Midlands Chapter of the SCMA!
Gymnasium, Ball Park Road Recreation Facility, 432 Ball Park Road, Lexington, SC 29072.

August 3-6, 2011: IPMS / USA National Convention, Omaha, Nebraska.

August 10, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road. **(Our one year anniversary!)**

September 14, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

October 12, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

November 9, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

December 14, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road. **(Christmas party anyone?!)**

April 26-28, 2012, AMPS International Show, WW2 Victory Museum, Auburn, IN. (woo hoo!)

Armor Modeling Forums where we “hang out:”

Send new sites and links to the editor for inclusion in the next newsletter.

AMPS Central South Carolina: <http://www.ampscentralsouthcarolina.org>

AMPS Homepage: <http://www.amps-armor.org/>

Armorama: <http://www.armorama.com/>

Historicus Forma: <http://www.hfmodeling.com/>

Missing-Lynx: <http://www.missing-lynx.com/>

Track-Link: <http://www.track-link.net/>

Tanks & Things: <http://tanksandthings.com/>

IDF in Scale.com: <http://www.idf-in-scale.com/index.html>

Armour Workshop:

<http://www.armorworkshop.ca/index.php?sid=042e18c7e22a67e8049fcb153c9d89d8>

Ralph Nardone's "Iron Modeler Blog": <http://www.ironmodeler.com/>

Mike Roof's Firefly:

<http://www.armorama.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&rtid=3516>

Dave Varettoni's Heller AMX 30 B2:

http://www.armorama.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=SquawkBox&file=index&req=viewtopic&topic_id=169849&page=1

Keith's "Map Reading by Lamp Light" Diorama:

<http://www.armorama.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&rtid=2072>

Newsletter Feature Article:

Product Review

Type: Tools - Hex Nut Punch and Die Set

Vendor: UMM "Unique Master Models" www.umm-usa.com

Part No: MN 031

Price: \$42.99

I first saw a review for this tool set on the AMPS website just after New-year, Jan 2011, by Chuck Aleshire:

<http://www.amps-armor.org/ampssite/reviews/showReview.aspx?ID=1565&Type=TR>

I had been longing for one of the old Historex Hex Nut Punch and Die Sets, but unfortunately, they're out of production now, and even when they were available, the price was well over US\$100. The Historex set also had a reputation as somewhat fragile and not very durable, with the steel punches wearing out the Plexiglas (acrylic plastic) dies after only moderate use. In the intervening years, I have used Grant Line hex nut castings to good effect. My only complaint, really, with the Grant Line

products was that I never could find a local source that kept them in stock. So, every couple of years, I'd place a great whopping big order for them, and just lived with wishing I could get a Historex hex set.

However, UMM has come to the rescue!

As soon as I read Chuck's review, I followed the link over to UMM's website only to find that the hex punch and die sets were sold-out (boo hoo). Well, after checking back every week or so for a couple of months, I figured, hey what the heck, the site list the sets as on-order, so why not place a set on order anyways. What's the worse that could happen? Status quo - I wind up waiting, right?



As soon as I placed my order, I received a very prompt message from John Vojtech, UMM's proprietor, informing me that the punch set was on-back order and that my credit card wouldn't be charged until the set was ready to ship. This was in addition to the other usual automated messages acknowledging receipt of my order. A couple of weeks later, I again received a pair of messages, one from John and one from the automated system informing me that my order had shipped. (My wait wasn't so long after all!)

The punch and die set arrived soon thereafter in good order. It consists of four hex-shaped punches, .8mm, 1.0mm, 1.2mm, and 1.8mm across. It also has a circular shaped die with holes for the different sized punches clearly marked. There is a fairly shallow annular clearance groove around the die for the working sheet stock. One very nicely engineered feature is a brass "indexing" pin at each punch hole on the die. These pins cam into flat spots milled on each punch and ensure that each hex punch positively aligns with its corresponding hex hole in the die.

This cam pin prevents the punches and dies from destroying themselves through misalignment. This feature corrects and improves on one of the major faults reported in the Historex hex punch and die set, its tendency to "round out" the die holes through misaligned punches.

Overall, the machining and tool quality is very nice. The punches are sharp and uniformly shaped and fit snugly into the dies. The holes in the die for the punch shafts are nice and large, as are the punch shafts. This promises a sturdy set-up that should handle use very well.



I was, however, a bit surprised to find that the punches and die were only shipped in zip-lock baggies, though, for use and storage. This "baggie-storage system" made for an awkward arrangement on the workbench, and I quickly found a metal Altoids mint box that was a perfect fit, glued in some rubber tool box liner, and used a piece of foam insulation board as a spacer and punch holder (similar to how my Waldron punch and die sets are stored). This storage method makes the punch and die set easy to reach for when needed to knock out a few hex nuts or bolts and then return to its resting place. I suppose that a

vendor supplied storage box would have added to the cost, and since finding an expedient was so easy, in the end, I'd rather have saved the money.

I then commenced to experiment a bit to see what the hex shapes actually looked like. This led me to my next conundrum: The circular die has a shallow recess in its bottom to allow a bit of space for the hex shapes to clear the bottom of the die holes, but this recess is very shallow and not large enough for more than a couple of shapes punched out of thin styrene sheet. For my Waldron sets, I have a small plastic box that I set the dies across and punch the circular shapes into (it also works to store extra "rivets" in). However, the circular UMM die is too small to fit across the same box. What to do?



In the end, I cut a "U-shaped" pad out of some sheet cork-board material which allows the die to sit across the arms with a clearance space underneath for the hex shapes to gather in. The cork has the added advantage that it dampens the hammer blows to the punches.

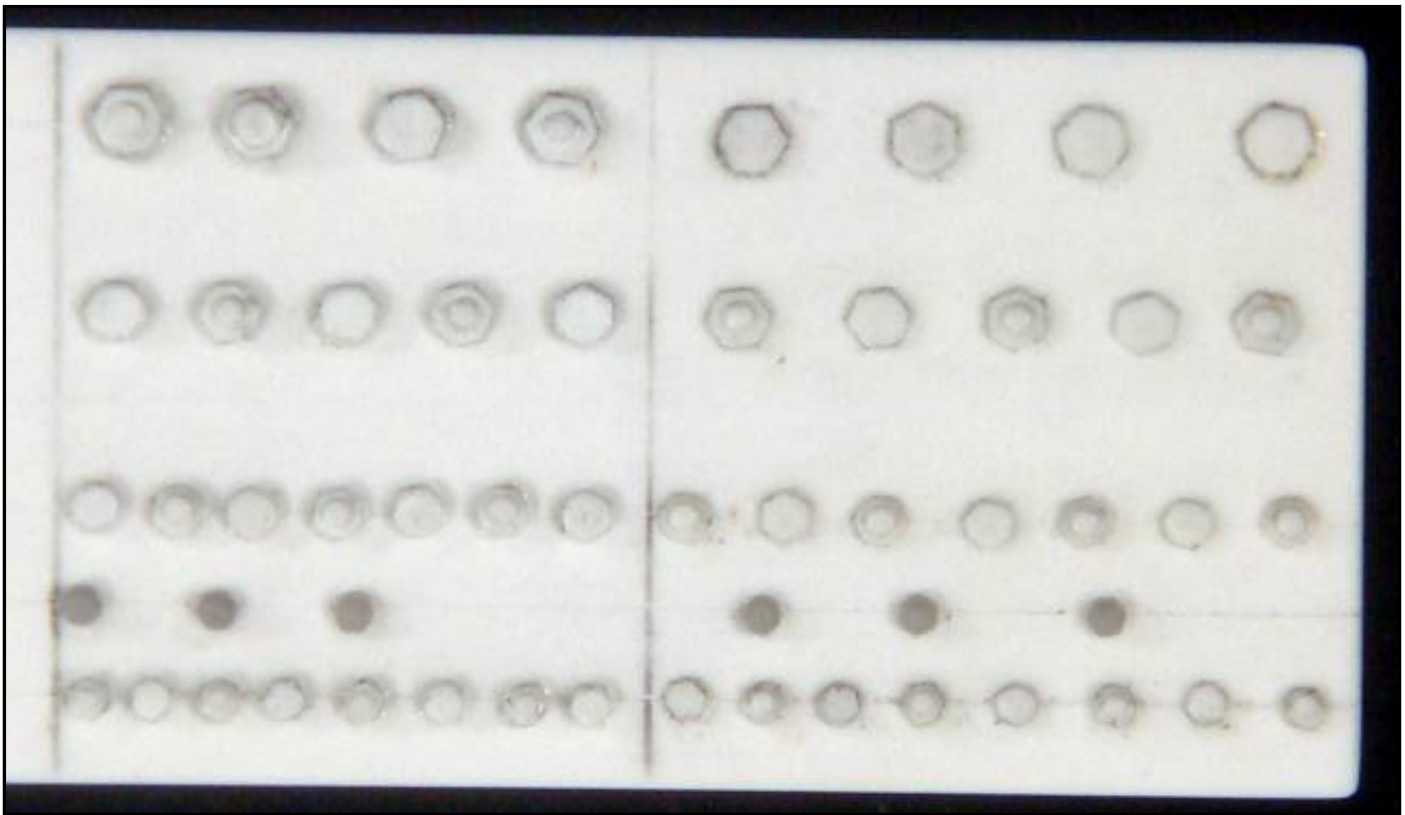
For tests, I banged out several dozen hex shapes out of both .010 and .020 Evergreen sheet styrene. I used a 1-oz jeweler's ball peen hammer, the same one that I use with my Waldron punches, and one that is plenty heavy enough for this set as well.

The first few hex shapes punched out with a bit of metal shaved from either the punches or the die holes (or both), but after a few more, the punches and die holes cleared themselves of the machining excess and the shapes punched out clean. This would probably be considered "normal" and nothing to be overly concerned about as long as the "wear-in" period isn't too long. (I guess it's similar to "breaking in" a new gun barrel where the first few shots smooth off the lands and grooves before the gun barrel reaches its sweet spot!)

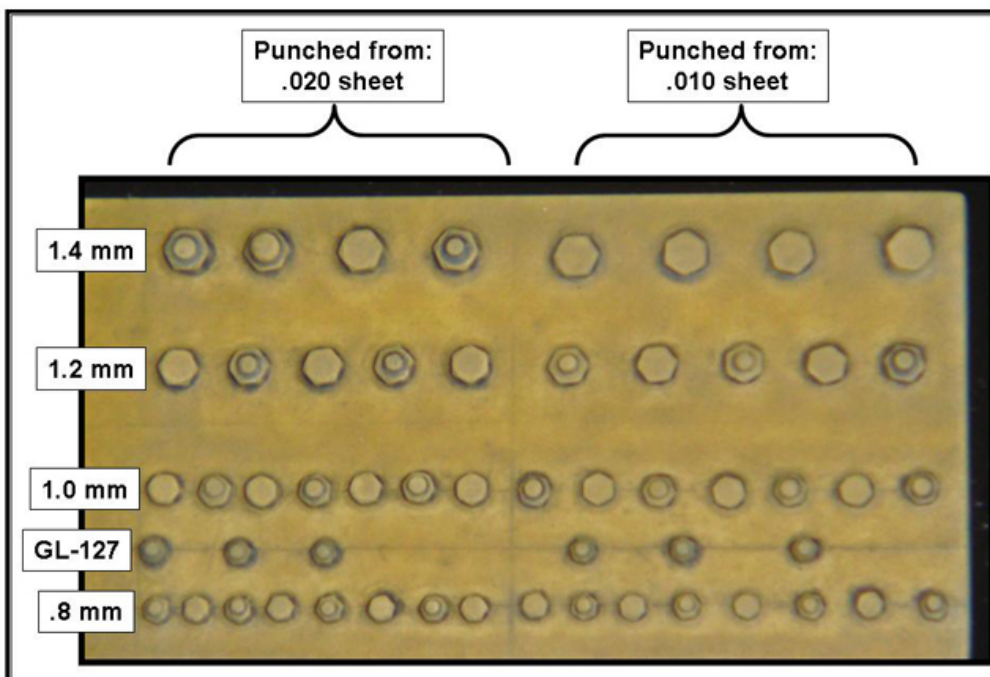


When using small punch and die sets, I've found that holding the punches close to where they enter the die holes with the finger and thumb also contacting the top of the die helps to brace the punches and cushion the shock of the hammer blows. Doing this helps to protect the tools and increase their working life. See the photo of the set in use to see what I'm trying to describe. It's also worth noting that only enough force to punch through the working stock should be used. This helps to prevent over-driving the punch through the working stock and into the work surface protecting the punch tips. It also reduces the lateral force on the die holes extending their life as well.

Having said all of this, though, the UMM hex punch and die set, because of its sturdy design, is less susceptible to damage from lateral force than are the Waldron sets. Still, the tips of the hex punches could easily be damaged by over-driving them into the work table.



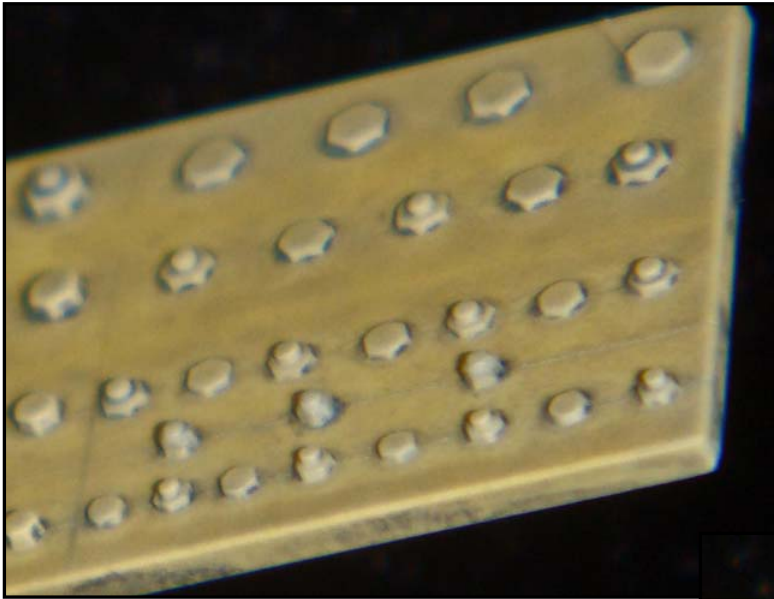
The attached photos show the hex shapes that I made on my tests. Some of these have round styrene disks punched with my Waldron sets to simulate the threaded bolts protruding from nuts. Also shown is a line of Grant Line number 127 hex nuts for comparison. This is one of the sizes that I use most often, and I was very interested in how close the UMM set could come to matching these.



As you can see, the .8mm hex shapes with .018 round shapes are a very close match to the GL 127. In fact, I think that .8mm hex's punched from .015 sheet with .018 disks punched from .005 thick sheet would be nearly identical to the GL 127. I'm guessing that the .8mm hex shape is the one I'll be using the most.

The only drawbacks to the UMM set that I feel are worth noting are: The shallow annular groove around the die for the

working stock limits the number of hex shapes that can be punched out before the stock edge must be trimmed back, and the shallow clearance recess in the bottom of the die doesn't provide much space for the punch tips and punched out hex shapes. The working stock issue is one that I think I



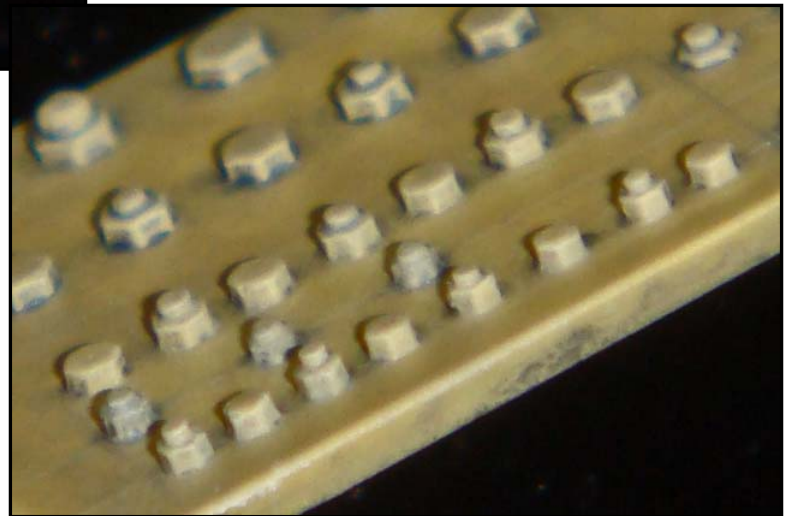
.010 Thick Hex Shapes

probably won't even notice after I've been using the set for a while, and adding a spacer under the die is so easy that this is not going to be an impediment to use either. (Bottom clearance is an issue with the Waldron sets, too.)

Overall, I have to say that I'm very pleased with the UMM hex punch and die set. It's an excellent value for the money and a tool set that I'm sure I'll be using a lot. If you're into accurizing, detailing, and scratch-building, this is a set that you'll definitely want to add to your tool kit!

Highly recommended!

Mike Roof
AMPS #1632



.020 Thick Hex Shapes

An Open Letter to the Membership

Subject: Raffle Requests

By: Tim Darrah, AMPS #2545

As you all know, I'm the vendor/raffle coordinator for our July contest. I would like to ask that every member of our club donate at least one item for the raffle in order to enhance what we might be able to bring in. I respectfully request that the items are still in the shrink wrap, if not then the boxes are still in very good condition and all parts are present and still on the trees.

One thing that people will remember is how good the raffle was and if we get sun-faded, dirty, torn model boxes, it would reflect badly on us. I went to a contest in the Upstate about 10 years ago, and the entire raffle looked like they were doing closet cleaning, we don't want that.

So please see what you have on-hand that might be a good raffle prize (Keith has already donated two big-ticket items) and get it to me at a future meeting. Or you might think about buying something new for the raffle (hint, hint).

It is easier to see how the raffle is forming up by me having all items in my hands. If a box is open, I will verify that everything is present then tape it closed.

If you have any questions, my e-mail addy is tttimmy@earthlink.net.

Thanks,

Tim

“The Day Room”

In the US military, most company-level units have a “day room” in the barracks where the troops hang-out, relax, and BS. When you want to learn the latest in “rumor control,” you swing by the day room and chat-up the Joes and Janes hanging out there. They might not always get it right, but they’re always willing to tell ya just what they think!

Well, guys, the big day for our show is fast approaching. I hope everyone is keeping their calendars open for the day before and the day of (July 15 and 16).

On July 15, we'll have Mike Petty, the AMPS Chief Judge visiting to present his judges' training seminar. This is very interesting information just from a model-builder's perspective, but it's really essential for AMPS judges. If possible, Mike will also stick around to help guide us with show operations. But the critical and essential element in all this is – YOU!

The AMPS judging system is the foundation of the entire "AMPS-Way" of contest / show operations and participation, and the judges are the key to that system! Without enough judges or judges who understand the process and objective, the AMPS judging system will not work, and without enough judges our contest will be a flop (to be polite about it). So, every one of us is needed to help with show operations and judging.

Having said, this though, I know that very few of us have any actual experience with the AMPS system and some of us might not be able (no matter how much they might want) to attend Mike Petty's training seminar on Friday, 15 July. So, over the next few meetings, we'll take a bit of time to get an early start on getting everybody up to speed. I have copies of all of Mike's training materials, plus some other things that I've been working on that we can use at each meeting.

If there's enough interest, we can even hold an "out of cycle" meeting and conduct our own internal training session without the time constraints of a regular club meeting.

In any event, we all need to start getting smart on the "AMPS-Way." Not only will it help us with our contest in July, but in the end, the entire thing is oriented to make everybody better model builders, and after all, isn't that just the whole point anyways?

Happy modeling,

Mike Roof
Chapter Contact