



Well, guys, our July contest is fast approaching, but I have to say that with the hard work of several members, we're looking good. As everybody should know by now, Scott Amey has solicited a trophy sponsor for each and every one of our categories, to include each of the four skill levels (junior thru advanced) for all of the regular categories. He's also gotten sponsors for all 10 of the special "best of" and theme awards. Way to go Scott!

Tim Darrah has been steadily selling vendor tables and soliciting for raffle donations. Tim's managed to sell almost all of our vendor tables and the raffle prize list has grown and grown. We now have, not one but, two (!) airbrush sets, both complements of Iwata / Medea, and we continue to receive queries about vendor table availability. So, we're looking pretty good on this front, too.

Jeff Nelson has done yeoman's work on drafting up signage and graphics for the show, so when contest day arrives, I'm sure we'll be putting a very professional look in front of the public.

I have placed our order for the special award plaques, and if the trophy shop delivers on schedule, I should have those at the next meeting for everyone to see.

Also, this month, our contest notices in the *AMPS Boresight* and *Fine Scale Modeling* have been published. Keep an eye out for these and also watch out for the July issue of *Scale Military Modeling International*, where our show should also be listed.

I would encourage those of you who haven't done so yet to consider making a model kit donation to the raffle. Tim will be happy to receive a donation at anytime, so please, if you can, help us out.

Our "special" meeting two weeks ago was only attended by three of us, but I feel that we all got something out of it. We conducted the meeting in a seminar format and were able to focus on examples of the errors that judges look for in the context of the AMPS judging system and scoring. Scott also delivered the last of the trophy sponsor money, and we reviewed Jeff's latest signage drafts. We might be able to repeat this seminar, though, if there's enough interest from other members. The next, and last, possible date (assuming a two week break and a Wednesday requirement) will be 22 June. (See "Up-Coming Events" below.) Give it some thought and tell us what you think at the next regular meeting.

Finally, don't forget that we're going to need a maximum effort from everybody on the day of the show, Saturday, 16 July, and that as many as possible need to attend the Judges' training session on Friday evening, the 15th. Judging is the heart and soul of any AMPS contest; everything else is just icing on the cake. And good judging relies on participation and hard work by guys who sincerely care about providing the best feedback to their peers as possible.

Last Meeting Minutes:

Our last regular meeting on 11 May was very well attended with 10 members bringing 10 models to show, and we pretty much followed our “regular” meeting agenda.

Scott Amey added \$460 in trophy sponsor money, and Keith Frape informed us that Accurate Armour would be a raffle donor and listed the prizes that they would provide. (Accurate Armour has now been added to the contest page of our web-site.)

Mike Roof provided a run down and estimate of the various costs associated with running the upcoming contest. Many of these will be one-time, start-up costs (for materials needed to support and run the judging – movement trays, lights, turn-tables, etc), but the most expensive of them will be reoccurring costs (trophies, medals, and printing) if we should run another contest next year. However, with the great response in trophy sponsorship and vendor table sales, our budget is good to cover all of the expected expenses for this year.

Members approved the purchase of the special awards and other contest materials. Bob Spagnola volunteered to source the PVC pipe table leg raisers that will be needed.

The main item of club business discussed and voted on was the requirement for annual membership dues. After some discussion of the need (based on reoccurring costs) and various options for funding, the members in attendance decided that all members would pay \$20 each for dues for the first year of membership. These dues are retroactive and effective through 31 December, 2011. That is, from the time the club was founded in August 2010, until the end of 2011. Starting January, 2012, annual dues will be \$12. Our club’s fiscal year will run from January through December.

So, a reminder for everyone – Dues are, well..., now due! (BTW: The web site has been up-dated to reflect this.)

Next Meeting Agenda:

Our next meeting will be at 6:00 pm, Wednesday, 08 June, 2011.

6:00 pm (1800): Meeting starts / Admin Business –

This month's business: (1) Review of Special Awards which should be ready for pick-up (2) Review of new signage drafted by Jeff (3) Discussion of the set-up timeline for the contest. Set-up will have to be done on Friday – the day before. Volunteer help will be needed. (4) Discussion of the Judges’ training seminar – We still need someone who lives in Lexington County to coordinate with the library to reserve the room.

6:30 pm (1830): Show & Tell: Builds and WIP’s

6:50 pm (1850): Break / Shopping / Mixer

7:10 pm (1910): Reconvene / Continue: Show & Tell: Builds and WIP’s

8:00 pm (2000): Meeting ends (officially – but we’ll carry-on as long as the store will stay open)

Regular meetings are held on 2nd Wednesdays of each month at 6:00 pm (1800) at the HobbyTown USA store, 10120 Two Notch Road, Suite 5, Columbia, SC 29223, (803) 736-0959.

Up-coming Events of Interest:

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

June 22, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Tentative special meeting for AMPS rules and contest procedures. 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!)

Newsletter Feature Article:

(No feature article for this month. Sorry guys!)

“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!

I’ve been involved in a pretty interesting on-line discussion over the last few days. It was all started by a guy asking the question: “Why has dry-brushing fallen out of favor?”

He said he was a guy just getting back in the hobby, and he noticed, as he read about how others are painting and finishing their models, that dry-brushing seemed to be an “old school” technique that was now “frowned upon.” Several of the replies to his post cited instructions, recommendations and other finishing advice from “experts” (otherwise well known, respected, and talented model builders) that said, in essence, that dry brushing was “unrealistic” and its continued use was a “heresy.”

In particular, two very well known and famous (well, as famous as you can be if you build plastic models!) experts were quoted as saying that since no actual tanks were ever built that had their details and such painted with ever-progressively lighter shades of paint to make them stand out, that any model that was so painted (i.e. dry brushed) was by (their) definition, “unrealistic”!

Really! Is that right...?

Well, how about this – To be sure, no “real” tanks have ever been produced where they were painted with lighter and lighter shades of the base coats so that their details would stand out. However, consider that no “real” military uniforms and accoutrements were ever produced and issued that had their shadows and highlights painted on either. No one argues that because “real” military uniforms don’t have painted on shadows and highlights that we should stop painting our miniature figures that way. So why the harsh words for painted on shadows and highlights for model vehicles?

I think a charitable answer, and one that gives the benefit of the doubt to the “experts,” is that they have simply overstated their case in an effort to make the point that “over done,” “garish,” or “poorly executed” dry brushing doesn’t look very realistic and not that dry brushing in and of itself is bad.

(However, I could be wrong about this – These “experts” could very well mean every harsh word they said....)

The issue is further clouded by the idea that there are “trends and fashions” in building and finishing that are influenced heavily by these same expert voices. I would submit to you, my friends, that there are a couple of very important things you should consider when analyzing and interpreting these kinds of statements.

First, you should consider whether or not the expert making these pronouncements has some potential personal gain. For example, if the “expert” is an owner or de facto-spokesperson for a manufacturer who sells or markets a particular finishing product or line of products (think about the guys who sell pigments, pre-mixed washes and filters, and “special” oil paints), his saying that the use of those same products or techniques is the only way to create a “realistic” model is a bit suspect, in my book. Or, perhaps the expert makes money selling “how to” articles, and you need to buy one of his books to learn the “secrets.” Or, perhaps the expert is “puffing up” one of his peers’ work in hopes that one day the favor will be returned. Or perhaps our expert runs a web site and is dependent on advertising from and the “cachet” provided by participation of the same experts above. Experts who are “semi-pro” model builders (or are otherwise involved in the model building industry) have an agenda that goes beyond the purely altruistic “helpful” advice that they so often give.

Second, you should consider the manner in which the results of such modeling trends are shown in magazines, books and on-line. For example, there’s a world of difference in building a model that will be viewed in extreme macro close-ups under harsh day-light balanced lighting and one that will be viewed using the ol’ Mk. 1 eye-ball under normal lighting. In the first instance, the builder can get away with NOT painting and finishing to compensate for the problems of scale lighting since the camera and studio lights will do that work for him. In the other case, though, the model builder must finish his model to address the scale lighting problems that are found in normal lighting and the need to emphasize details for the un-aided eye. Dry brushing that jumps out under the camera lens may not be visible at all with the naked eye.

So, my advice to our original poster was: On my work bench, dry brushing has not fallen out of favor. Percentage-wise, I don’t use it as much as I used to since I ALSO use many other techniques and methods in addition to dry brushing. But dry brushing, if done subtly and well, remains a viable and useful finishing tool and technique. Finishing models can be complicated, and the techniques used

need to be understood in the context of how they work together and contribute to the final look that you desire. There are no “silver bullets” or “magic potions” or “simple step-by-step instructions” that you can follow each and every time. There are also no “heresies,” or techniques that should never be used!

In the end, the only thing that counts is whether or not you achieve the final look you want. If you have, then you can be satisfied that the techniques you used were the right ones. If you're not, learn from your own experiences and change what you do on the next model. It's not the technique that counts, but how you use it.

Happy modeling!
Mike