



Happy Holidays, guys!

Our Christmas party is about neigh, and I'd like to thank all of you who jumped in so quickly when the call went out for volunteers to bring contributions to our little pot-luck. You guys just make it so easy, and I really appreciate the spirit. It does look like we'll have a veritable feast!

I do hope to see all of you at the next meeting. Even if you haven't been able to regularly make all of our gatherings, don't let that stop you from coming and catching up with your AMPS mates. This is the time of year for catching up on old times and renewing acquaintances – the more the merrier!

As you get ready for the party, don't forget to bring along something for the "white elephant" gift exchange, if you want to play along. I think we had a great time last year. The better the prizes, the more "swapping" that happens, and for this year, I've been told by a couple of you that you intend to up-the-ante with your gifts and instigate a whirlwind of "swapping" activity.

I know that several of you are planning on bringing in your latest builds and WIP's, so we'll have a separate table set up just for those to keep them out of the way of the feasting and gifting.

Last year we had a great crowd, and I hope this year will be no different. See ya Wednesday!

Last Meeting's Minutes:

Our last meeting was held at 6:00 pm, November 13, 2013. We had 18 members in attendance, and those members brought in 12 models to show and tell. Rebecca won the raffle prize, a Tamiya, 1/48 M8 Armored Car.

During the meeting: 1) We organized the club-build / intra-club contests using Tim's "idea lottery." See in this issue the subjects and dates for the builds / contests. We'll be following a four-month window for each build, the first event, "Any US Subject" (idea submitted by Trevor), is scheduled for our March 2014 meeting. We will also present HTU gift cards as awards - \$25, \$20, and \$15 for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place based on scores at each contest. Judging and scoring will be by AMPS rules, and any tie scores will go the LOWER skill-level modeler. 2) We voted to hold our 2013 Christmas party at our December 11 meeting. A "sign up" list has been passed around by email for members to volunteer to bring items for our "pot-luck" hor d'oeuvres. We'll also have our annual "white elephant" gift exchange at the party. See also in this issue the rules for the "white elephant" gift exchange. 3) We passed around a sign-up sheet for name tags. Tim will have these made up over the month, the club will front the cost from our treasury, and members will reimburse the treasury when they take delivery. Individual cost for the tags is \$9 each.

Next Meeting's Agenda:

Our Christmas Party will be at 6:00 pm, Wednesday, 11 December, 2013 at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road, Columbia.

6:00 pm (1800): Meeting starts / Admin Business – 1) Vote on putting in a bid to host the 2016 AMPS International Convention. See below for a discussion. If we vote to put a bid, then we'll open the floor to volunteers for the contest / convention committee and committee chair. 2) White Elephant gift exchange. 3) Distribute the name tags purchased and made since the last meeting. If you ordered one, please bring your money and reimburse the treasury (i.e. pay Scott).

Please read through the discussion below about the proposed 2016 AMPS International Convention bid.

REMINDER: The HobbyTown USA store will close at 7:00 pm (1900). This means that all purchases at the store must be made before then so that the cash registers can be closed.

6:15 pm (1810): Show & Tell: Builds and WIPs.

6:50 pm (1850): Break: Shopping & Social Mixer. Cash registers close at 7:00 pm.

7:10 pm (1910): Reconvene: Continue Show & Tell: Builds and WIPs

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:

Dec 11, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS Christmas Party at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Jan 08, 2014, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Feb 12, 2014, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Feb 14-16, 2014: AMPS Atlanta show in cooperation with the Atlanta Military Figure Society. The 2014 show theme is "People Movers" (combat troop carriers, wheeled or tracked, any era). The Atlanta Marriott Century Center, Atlanta, GA.

Mar 12, 2014, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road. **Our first Intra-Club Contest / Group Build!** Theme – Any US Subject (AMPS eligible, of course).

Apr 3-5, 2014: AMPS International Convention, Fredericksburg Hospitality House (Convention Center), Fredericksburg, VA. Convention theme: "Hollywood Tanks."

Apr 09, 2014, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

May 14, 2014, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Jun 11, 2014, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Jul 09, 2014, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road. **Intra-club contest / group build.** Theme – Any T-44 to T-62 Family AFV (T-44, 54, 55, and 62 and vehicles built on that chassis).

Aug 13, 2014, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Sep 10, 2014, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Oct 08, 2014, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Nov 12, 2014, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road. **Intra-club contest / group-build.** Theme – Light Tanks, under 20 tons (any era, nationality, or scale).

Dec 10, 2014, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS Christmas Party at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Intra-Club Contests / Group-Builds for 2014

Moderator: Tim Darrah

Rules and judging: We will set-up standard AMPS judging stations and use the current AMPS rules and scoring for the models. Each model will be judged and scored with standard AMPS written scores and comments provided to the builder. The three highest scoring models will further be awarded 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place for that intra-club contest. Prizes will be HTU gift cards purchased from our treasury - \$25, \$20, and \$15 for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places, respectively. In the event of tie scores, the LOWER skill-level builder will be the winner. Tie-scores within a skill-level will be judged against each other using a comparative process by members other than the two (or more) entrants.

Eligibility: Entries are restricted to the following subject areas. You must be an AMPS Central SC "Wildcats" member in good-standing in order to enter (dues, delinquent or new member, may be paid on the spot, if necessary). Modelers will be allowed to enter any number of qualifying entries, and all entries will be judged and scored, but only their single highest scoring model will be eligible for one of the monetary awards. In the event that we have more entries than we can reasonably judge during the meeting, modelers may be asked to select certain of their entries for judging with the remainder being considered "display only."

All entrants and members present will be asked to join one of the judging teams. We will organize these teams with AMPS certified Table Captains. AMPS judging certification will not be required to judge. Table Captains and other certified AMPS judges will mentor any inexperienced field judges, as necessary.

Subjects / Categories by tri-annual periods:

March 12, 2014 – "Anything American"

July 9, 2014 – "T-44/54/55/62 Family" – In addition to the T-44, there are 5 variants of the T-54, 13 variants of the T-55 and 39 variants of the T-62.

November 12, 2014 – "Light Tanks, under 20 tons" – There are numerous vehicles that fit in this description such as FT-17 (6.5t), M-2 (11.6t), M-3/5 Stuart (16t), M-24 Chaffee (18.4t), Type 95 Ha-

Go (7.4), T-26 (9.6t), Fiat M11/39 (11t), Soviet BT-series (11.5t), Pz I (5.4t), Pz II (8.9t), 35t (10.5t), 38t (9.85t), PT-76 (14.6t), M-551 Sheridan (15.2t).

So, get started building!

Christmas Party "White Elephant" Gift Exchange Rules

In order to participate, you must bring a wrapped, modeling-related gift to the meeting. All of the gifts will be placed in a single pile, and each participant will be given a numbered lottery ticket with the corresponding number placed in a hat (well, actually, our raffle "bucket").

1: The number of rounds of the Christmas swap is determined by the number of people participating plus one bonus round. Order of participation is determined by drawing numbers from a hat and the sequence in which unwrapped gifts are "stolen."

2: Gifts are wrapped so the presents are unknown before opening.

3: A gift can only move once during a round.

4: Participate has a choice at the beginning of a round of any remaining wrapped gift or a known (i.e. unwrapped) gift in the possession of another member that has not moved once during the round.

5. If a participant has his unwrapped gift "stolen" during a round, he has a choice of either selecting another unwrapped gift or taking a wrapped gift. If he takes a wrapped gift, the round ends with him. If he takes ("steals") an unwrapped gift, the round continues with the participant whose unwrapped gift was just "stolen." This continues until either all the unwrapped gifts have moved once or one of the participants selects a wrapped gift instead of an unwrapped gift.

6: The 1st round person gets one more selection in what is called the bonus round.

7: After gift swap members are encouraged to trade or barter for items more to their preference.

Decision 2016: A bid to Host the AMPS International Convention

This December, we need to make the official call on whether or not we're going to bid to host the 2016 AMPS International Convention. We need to make this call now, so that we can start lining up resources, and so that I can begin to make our intentions known to the AMPS leadership. I will have an opportunity to meet with some of the national leaders in Atlanta in February and hopefully to present a draft proposal during the 2013 International Show this April in Fredericksburg, VA.

I have discussed this with an informal group (seven including me) of our members who have already volunteered to become the core of a contest / convention committee should we decide to bid. Note that we have already conducted physical surveys of tentative convention venues and tour destinations. During our last contest in June, 2013, we took our AMPS Regional 2VP, Mike Petty to visit these locations and solicited his input on them. He was very positive about these proto-plans.

As a group, we decided to not host a local / regional contest this coming year, 2014, in order to charge our batteries for an anticipated run at the 2016 convention. As a club, we are taking this coming year off, but that time available is still an opportunity for some serious work by a convention committee if we are committed to use it.

So, now we need to "call the ball," and decide if we're going to bid. The 2016 convention is, for several reasons, our best opportunity until at least 2018. The timing assumptions look like this:

2014 – Fredericksburg, VA and AMPS Central VA. I have been reliably informed that (at this time) AMPS Central VA is not interested in hosting another convention for several years.

2015 – Probably Chicago, IL. This is almost a certainty. A year ago there were two chapters in the running for 2015, but the Dayton, OH chapter has taken a backseat. Note that the Dayton, OH AMPS chapter is also IPMS Dayton "Wright Field" who have hosted several IPMS Nat's over the years.

2016 – Our best option to bid without the possibility of going head-to-head with another chapter and region. It is unlikely that AMPS would want to host two, back-to-back conventions in the Midwest – Chicago and Dayton. AMPS Central VA will not likely desire to host again so soon. Atlanta AMPS is a possibility, but unknown at this time. If we don't bid, Atlanta could be asked to volunteer, though, putting the 2016 in the Southeast anyways.

2017 – This would be AMPS Dayton / IPMS Wright Field's next best window for a Midwest AMPS convention. If the 2016 convention was held in the Southeast (AMPS Atlanta) or East (AMPS Central VA – by default), then back-to-back Southeast locations (i.e. Columbia, SC) would probably not be desirable.

2018 – If the 2017 convention went to Dayton, OH, then a Southeast or East region convention would be a possibility. However, another possibility is that by this time, a Rocky Mountain or West Coast bid could present itself. Either of those two regions would be almost an automatic choice if that happened. This is a slim possibility at this time, but sooner or later, a West Coast AMPS convention is going to happen.

It looks to me like the best year for us to bid on is 2016. After that, the planning assumptions become increasingly less certain, and beyond 2018, it's really impossible to see what the circumstances might be.

Right now, we have good and fairly firm tentative locations for a venue and tours; our informal contest committee members are ready; the timing on a bid for 2016 is favorable; we have enough lead time to "stake out our ground" with the AMPS leadership. If we want to host an AMPS International Convention, now is the time to commit.

We'll open the floor to discussion and vote at the next meeting. Proxy votes will be accepted if you send them to me at our club email or send them with another member who will vote in your stead.

What Modeling Tool has made the Biggest Difference in Your Work?

"What tool has made the biggest difference in your modeling?" This was a question that was posed a while back on one of the internet modeling forums that I frequent. I kind of glossed over the question the first time I saw the post, and later I went back and read a few of the replies. But these replies got me thinking...

Most of the replies were pretty predictable: an airbrush; some fancy sprue cutter; the Flex-file; things like that. The replies all cited very specific tools with specific (and often very limited) purposes that this or that modeler says has changed his building forever – at least until the next cool tool comes along.

As I started to consider what I would say if I replied, it occurred to me that NO SINGLE TOOL in my shop has profoundly changed my building, but that all of them have had (and still have) some influence on me. What's more, all of these influences combine together to put me where I am today. The influence of each single tool added to my "tool box" has been progressive, over the years, changing my modeling, not all at once, but gradually:

It's easy, as an adult and experienced builder, to forget those very early years as youngster and budding model-builder, but adding each new tool opened up whole new areas and developed new skills.

Most of these early experiences are simply by-passed by a lot adult builders because they get good advice, have access to the internet and dozens of magazines, and usually have enough disposable income to purchase tools that, as a kid, I knew nothing about or could only dream and wish for.

Here are some of my own "Tool-driven milestones:"

a. Learning to use a fingernail clipper to cut the parts off the sprue instead of just twisting them back and forth to break them off! (I guess I was about 7 or 8 years old at the time...) Interestingly, almost 50 years later I still use a pair of fingernail clippers for some fine cutting work. The same goes for those emery board fingernail files. I still keep 'em on my workbench and use 'em from time to time.

b. Getting my first X-acto knife was major! I was about 10 years old before my mom would let me keep my "razor" knife in my room, unsupervised. Until then, I had to go and "sign it out" from her when I wanted to do model building!

c. Using liquid glue instead of tube glue for the first time. What a revelation! Just don't let it run all over and leave finger prints. But then again, gluey-finger prints led to the "finger-pat-glue" technique of creating cast texture, so there was more to the learning curve... (After all these years, Testors liquid cement is still my go-to glue for 90% of what I do.)

d. Finding Pactra flat "Military Model Colors" enamel paints. You might remember those, the little tiny square bottles with the Pactra "paint drop logos" molded on the sides... Flat "military" colors that actually looked realistic instead of that glossy, grass green paint that took forever to dry. Of course, I did learn to mix talcum powder into gloss enamels as a flattening agent, so there was something to be learned with those early gloss colors, too.

e. The joy of my first real quality, fine-tipped paint brush. Economics made me learn how to keep my brushes clean and to extend their life, too.

f. Working all summer and saving up for my first airbrush and then learning on my own through the school of hard-knocks how to use it! I still have a soft-spot in my heart for my old Badger Model 200. (Which is like an original Daniel Boone skinning knife, I've only replaced the handle once, the tips twice and the needles 5 times!)

g. Getting a small sanding block and learning to true-up edges, adding precision and accuracy to basic construction.

h. Discovering a source of Evergreen sheet, rod and strip styrene. Who knew that mere mortal model builders could get such stuff?! Until that moment, Evergreen styrene was the stuff of legends and magazine authors!

The list could go on, but like a lot of guys above, the latest major "milestone" was swallowing my pride and getting (and using!) a vision aid! Now, my el-cheapo knock-off Optivisor is that indispensable tool!

So, what tool has changed your modeling the most?

“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! So, welcome to “the Day Room...”

OK, gang, that's all for this month's newsletter.

Put some thought into the "Decision 2016" issue and please be ready to cast your vote at the next meeting.

I'd like to make these final points about that:

We have a solid cadre of volunteers who will form the convention committee. These guys have done a significant amount of the heavy lifting already, and I believe that they can put together a good program. Our provisional convention committee is firmly committed to making it happen.

Anyone in the club who would like to become a part of the convention committee can. All you need to do is tell me that you want to join in.

The AMPS International Convention is, for the hosting club, not unlike a large regional show in the amount of resources required to organize and prepare. We have done this in the past; we have done a superlative job at it; and we can do it for this show, too.

However, if we win the bid and are given the show to host, it will take a 100% commitment by everyone in the club to run the event. During the days of the show (a Thursday through a Sunday), we will need everyone to pitch in and help for the DURATION of the convention. Although there should be ample opportunity for everyone in the club to enjoy the show (the models, the vendors, and the seminars), we will all need to make some sacrifices in what we'd like to do in order to do what we must do.

The more that you're each willing to help out and be there for the club and the show, the more time we will all have to enjoy at least some of the events.

See ya Wednesday, and Merry Christmas!

Mike Roof

Chapter Contact

AMPS Central SC "Wildcats"