

ALBUQUERQUE SCALE MODELERS



<http://abqscalemodelers.com>

April/May 2013

WHAT HAPPENED? JOE WALTERS

Last month, I was preparing the issue and had even prepared all the photos for printing, and placed them; I went to get the text articles, and... *there weren't any*. I hadn't received a single submission! So I couldn't build a newsletter.

Turns out that even though I didn't *receive* any articles, two were *sent* to me, but didn't arrive. As they were sent on the same day and around the same time, it appears something happened with our internet service. Around our house, we refer to such a thing as a "Comcastic Experience."

So this issue combines material from both months. Sorry about that, and thanks to Tony Humphries and John Tate for properly submitting their articles!

From now on, when you send me an article, you

should receive an acknowledgment from me within 24 hours (usually sooner). If you don't hear from me... I don't have your article. Bug me until it works!

THE PREZ'S FEZ SEZ TONY HUMPHRIES

Having looked at customer service last month, let's take a look at another area that causes us problems sometimes—aftermarket parts. We would all love to have kits that are accurate straight OOB or that actually fit together without advanced origami techniques, ninja

March meeting highlights, below L – R: Members checking out the models; Dave Straub brought home a bunch of souvenirs from ModelFiesta in San Antonio; and the business meeting in progress.



April meeting highlights: Members checking out the models; Ken Liotta holds a clinic.



Editor's Note: Photos of Best of Show winners for three contests (!) may be found on the Bonus Pages, for you electronic subscribers!

skills or duct tape, but that doesn't always happen of course. Some companies such as Tamiya are notorious for meticulously measuring and reproducing museum examples of subjects that never even remotely existed in real life. The fit may be great, but the accuracy? Hmm... Others seem to release kits based on a bad dream that one of their designers had one night after a particularly spicy curry. Either way, whether it's to enhance the accuracy of our builds, to correct flaws, replace poorly fitting parts or to improve the level of detail



I WEAR A FEZ NOW

Fezzes are cool.

Year 2013 Contest Quick Reference Chart

Titles in **blue** indicate contests for points

- 04 Jan** **SPECIAL CONTEST #1**
SCI-FI/SCIENCE/REAL SPACE/FANTASY
Sponsored Contest: "Frickin' Laser Beams" (Patrick Dick)
Sponsored Contest: "Rolls Royce" (Patrick Dick)
- 01 Feb** **ASM Swap Meet**—no contest.
- 01 Mar** **Open Contest**—Any kit/subject/scale.
Sponsored Contest: "Revell 1/48 Ventura" (E-Board)
- 05 Apr** **More Than One Radial Engine**—Any kit/subject/scale.
Famous Motorsports Vehicles—Any kit/subject/scale.
Sponsored Contest: "Best Sci-Fi Spaceship" (Don Smith)
- 03 May** **SPECIAL CONTEST #2**
SINGLE IN-LINE ENGINED AIRCRAFT
Sponsored Contest: "Revell 1/32 He-219" (Hobby Proz)
- 07 Jun** **Cold War**—Any kit/subject/scale.
Cherche la Femme—Female-named subject, any kit/subject/scale.
- 12 Jul** **Open Contest**—Any kit/subject/scale.
Sponsored Contest: "North African Armor" (James Guld, Tony Humphries)
- 02 Aug** **ASM Swap Meet**—no contest.
- 13 Sep** **On the Water**—Anything waterborne, any kit/subject/scale.
Beyond Babe Artwork—Any subject with non-pinup nose art.
Sponsored Contest: "TBA" (Gil De La Plain)
- 04 Oct** **Axis of WWII**—Any subject excluding Germany and Japan.
Go Figure—Any humanoid figure.
Sponsored Contest: "Big" (Brian Peck)
- 01 Nov** **Open Contest**—Any kit/subject/scale.
Sponsored Contest: "Danny Roberts / Best P-38" (Mike Blohm, John Tate)
- 06 Dec** **SPECIAL CONTEST #3**
JET POWER
Plus *Model of the Year* competition!

(or all of the above if we're talking about Airfix), we are all going to need to use aftermarket parts at some point.

There are a number of problems that often rear their ugly heads, however:

One is **scale**. If you as a manufacturer are going to release a kit, here's a novel idea for you: why not make it in the scale that you say it is?!? If it's 1/35th, make it 1/35th. Not 1/34th-and-a-half. Not 1/37th. Make it 1/35th. There are such things as tape measures, rulers, yardsticks, etc., after all, and if we're paying \$70 or often more for a kit, we expect your research people to know how to use one. You can even use (frikkin') lasers

FRED'S FOTO FILE

FRED FRANCESCHI

Military Vehicle Museum: Downey, California

This is a “bad” month for the Foto File. Somewhere in my house is a scrapbook that has photos which would be perfect for the April (Fool’s) issue of our newsletter. And to make matters even worse, FineScale Modeler wrote an article that goes with my photos. But, alas, the scrapbook is not locatable. Maybe I will find it by next April.

So I digitized some slides that I took in 1978. That’s 35 years ago, for those of you who might care. I took the pictures at a military vehicle museum in Downey, California. I visited twice—once when the weather was really sunny and nice, and the other time when it was cold and drizzling. Hence the variation in the quality of the photos.

As I look at the photos, I wonder how many of the vehicles survived the 35-year span since I took them. In one photo I see several Amtracks, and I sure hope they weren’t disposed of as scrap metal.

Included are several photos of a small tank in German markings. But I see that it has rubber tracks. Okay, guys, what is it?

And there’s the WC-54 Ambulance, a staple of the military. This one was taken on a cold drizzly day;

the kid shivering next to the ambulance is my son Steve, 35 years ago.



There are several morals to these photos. Something commonplace now may be very rare in 35 or 45 or 55 years. If you like it, get your camera out and use it now. Maybe in 30 or 40 years you will be doing your own Foto File.

And the restored Roadrunner Convoy military vehicles you saw at the Chile Cons are often in better shape than many of the ones at museums. Whenever you have a chance, shoot the hell (digitally) out of them. When will you see an M-18 Hellcat or a halftrack again? The answer is: Maybe never.

[Editor’s note: All of Fred’s photos from this museum visit, larger and in full resolution, may be found in the Bonus Pages! -JW]

to measure stuff these days, so there is no excuse for not getting it right. Either way we would then stand a sporting chance of getting aftermarket parts from other manufacturers to fit your kit without requiring an engineering degree. The same goes for the aftermarket manufacturers too, of course. Oh, and while we’re at it, if you are releasing aftermarket parts yourself to upgrade your own kits, why weren’t they included in the original kit to start with?!?! Bloody cheapskates...

Another common issue is **fit**. If you are going to release an aftermarket upgrade to an existing kit, how about testing it to see if it actually fits? A revolutionary idea, I know, but it would really help. No, I’m not making this up! If you have a metal gun barrel for a tank, make sure it actually fits where the kit one should. If you have a resin cockpit, how about making sure that the fuselage still fits together when we place it? I know that this is not always easy but some companies seem to make little or no effort in this regard. Take for example an aftermarket set of tracks that I bought for the Tamiya Matilda. They’re both Japanese companies based within a few miles of each other. The Japanese are known for their manufacturing quality. At least, I thought they were. The tracks were released several months after the kit was too, so you’d think they would fit the kit, right? Oh, you poor deluded fool... Not even close. Not only had the designer clearly never actually seen a tank before (one had presumably been described to him over the phone by a two-year old, or possibly by his dog) but the name “Matilda” in the product name must have been arrived at either by the kind of mistranslation that starts wars, or by a total and complete fluke. It is said that an infinite number of monkeys typing on an infinite number of typewriters will eventually produce all of the works of Shakespeare. In my opinion it would take three or four of them about five minutes to be honest, but the same principle must surely have been at work here. Sheer, utter, unadulterated chance. So, having consigned them to the trash can and being about \$25 poorer, I can at least say that I am also \$25 wiser, but it’s a lesson that we should never have to learn, surely?

Accuracy also matters. If you’re going to give us a resin upgrade, make sure it is an upgrade and not just a resin copy of the kit parts

(I'm looking at you, Verlinden...) or a wild stab in the dark with little or no supporting evidence. "It probably looks something like that, judging by this grainy two-inch square black and white photograph that we found on Google" is simply not good enough.

Quality matters too. If you buy a resin upgrade you expect it to be smooth and well-shaped and molded. It shouldn't have air bubbles like the Grand Canyon. It shouldn't look like a blind cobbler's thumb. It should be *right*.

Let's mention **price** too, while we're at it. If you are going to add a set of engine grills or aftermarket tracks to a tank, they shouldn't cost three times the price of the original kit (unless you buy that kit as a bargain at one of ASM's excellent swap meets of course—hint, hint). That's just absurd. We know that the economies of scale help the big guys out here and that small production runs are expensive but there are limits.

Also of course, the price of the original kits is going up and up these days too. How about some reasonably priced stuff and not \$150 for a single-engine 1/32-scale aircraft kit? Sure you have to do your research and development (and many manufacturers need to do plenty more of the research part) and the costs of tooling and production are ever increasing, but \$150 for an aircraft kit? It had better be gold plated or capable of flying me to work under its own power for that price... You can rest assured that if you haven't been asked for that much for a kit yet, it's only a matter of time too. Some companies such as Eduard, for example, seem to be doing a good job there with their "weekend kit" range. Others, such as Tamiya seem to think that we're all as rich as Creosote. Or Croesus. Whatever his name was... Their pricing structure is bad enough for new kits, but for 1973 re-issues? Tsk, tsk, bah humbug etc. It simply shouldn't be allowed.

was excellent, with all skill levels represented on the contest tables, including a number of works-in-progress entries. Judging that many good models was difficult, so special thanks to volunteers Patrick Dick, Tim Wood, and Larry Horyna for tackling Intermediate and Masters judging. Standout models included Marie Smith's "Breyer Horse" in Juniors (Best of Show and People's Choice), newcomer Fred Behnken's "USS Ward" in Basic (Best of Show and People's Choice), Steve Brodeur's impressive "Saturn 1B/Apollo 7" rocket in Intermediate (People's Choice) and Jim Guld's "Final Push" diorama in Masters (Best of Show).

Best of Show in Intermediate went to Frank Randall's excellent 1/48 P-36 model in natural metal, and People's Choice in Masters went to Brian Peck for his new Wingnut Wings 1/32 Fokker D.VII.

The March contest night also had an E-Board Sponsored Contest, for best Revell 1/48 Ventura; Larry Horyna was the only modeler brave enough to tackle this beast, and did a nice job with an Aleutians-based PV-1 Ventura in a mid-WWII USN intermediate scheme. Best wishes to Larry Horyna, a popular former club president and longtime ASM member, on his upcoming relocation to Maine.

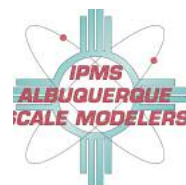
Next month's points model contest, on April 5, is the first of Contest Director Ken Liotta's "dual-theme" contest nights, with Theme 1, More than One Radial Engine, and Theme 2, Famous Motorsports Vehicles. It's also a Sponsored Contest night, with Don Smith holding a Best Sci-Fi Spaceship contest. Up to five models can be entered by modelers on this contest night.

Thanks and congratulations to everyone who participated in the March contest, and remember to keep to your building schedule- the IPMS Nationals in Colorado is only five months away.

CONTEST DIRECTOR UPDATE

JOHN TATE (MARCH)

On March 1, 2013, ASM held the first points contest of the 2013 contest year, with an open theme. Turnout



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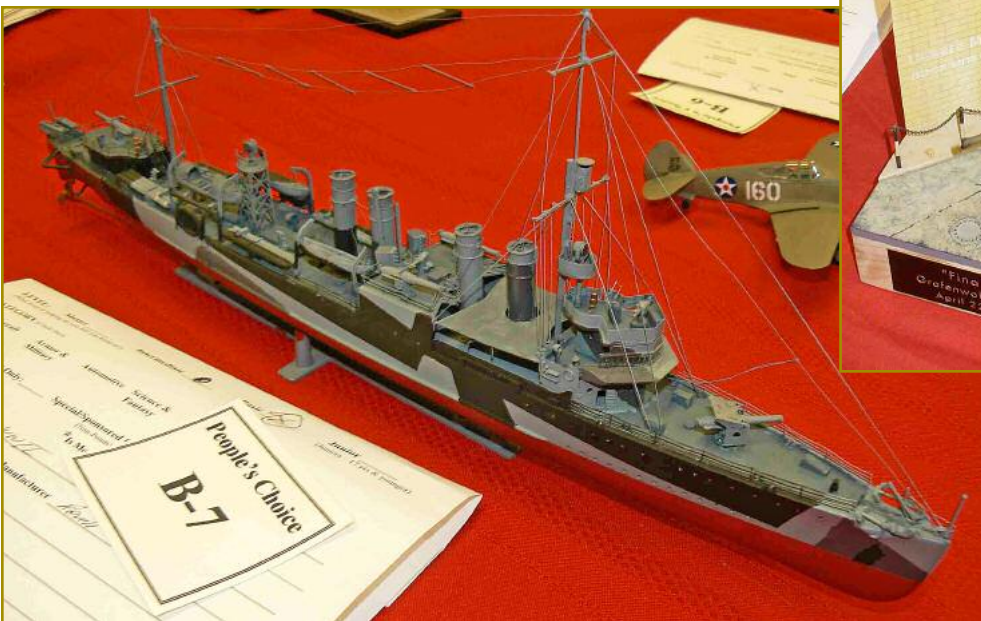
ASM members are encouraged to submit articles, reviews and other items as appropriate. Contact editor Joe Walters for details and specs. Submission deadline for each issue is the 20th of the preceding month.

BONUS PAGES!

BEST OF SHOW WINNERS

MARCH (OPEN THEME)

Top to Bottom: Marie Smith's *Breyer Horse*; Jim Guld's *Final Push*; Fred Behnken's *USS Ward*; and Frank Randall's *P-36A Hawk*.



BONUS PAGES!

BEST OF SHOW WINNERS

APRIL (RADIAL ENGINE)

Top to Bottom: Victor Maestas's *FW-190* & *Ju-88 Mistel*; Frank Randall's *PV-1 Ventura*; and Matt Blohm's *R4D-5 Gooney Bird*.



BONUS PAGES!
BEST OF SHOW WINNERS
APRIL (FAMOUS MOTORSPORTS VEHICLES)

Victor Maestas's C6R Corvette.



SPONSORED CONTEST
APRIL (BEST SCI-FI SPACESHIP ENTRY)

Josh Pals's Alpha Centauri Saucer.



BONUS PAGES! FRED'S FOTO FILE

FRED FRANCESCHI

Military Vehicle Museum: Downey, California

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Included are several photos of a small tank in German markings. But I see that it has rubber tracks. Okay, guys, what is it?



And there are some photos of an LCVP from the USS Mathews, KA-96. This LCVP may have been on the ship when she served in the Pacific during the World War II years. The boat was probably filling with rainwater and rotting out at the time I took the photo.



And there's a scout car. On the side is "W__ANNAHILL & SONS WRECKING." It was converted into a utility truck. And what the heck is that thing hanging on the front bumper? The military hobby guys get vehicles in this condition and rebuild them back to their original condition. Real Man's kitbashing and scratchbuilding.

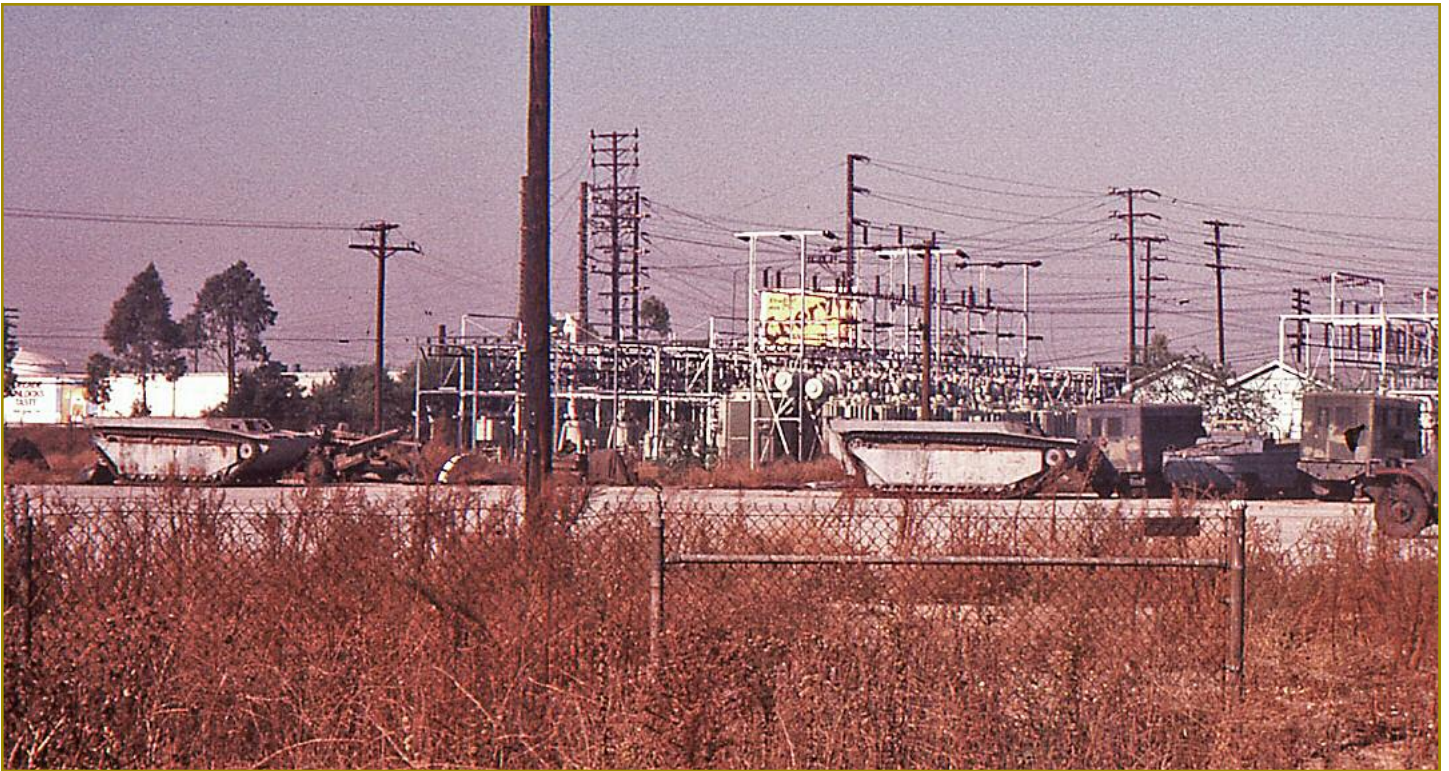


The M7 Priest has always been a favorite of mine. So I took several pictures of it.





There's also an M4 Sherman. It looks like the paint on the turret doesn't match the paint on the front. And I see metal tracks. Was a later turret put on an earlier hull ??



And there's the WC-54 Ambulance, a staple of the military. This one was taken on the cold drizzly day, and the kid shivering next to the ambulance is my son Steve, 35 years ago.



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