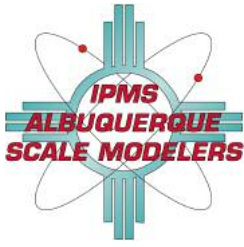


ALBUQUERQUE SCALE MODELERS



<http://abqscalemodelers.com>

September 2007

PREZ NOTES: 2007 IPMS/USA NATIONAL CONVENTION REPORT KEN LIOTTA

This year's convention was hosted by Orange County IPMS Chapter in Anaheim, California, at the Marriott Hotel. Many aspects of the convention were exciting and enjoyable. However, way too many flaws overshadowed the event and, unfortunately, will mark this year's Nats as possibly the worst in years.

Where do I begin? Let's start at the registration desk. Five people in front of me and no movement for 20 minutes. Didn't get to the desk itself for another 20 more. Once I got there I announced that I had prepaid via the official web site and produced my printed PayPal receipt and the fellow disappeared for another 15 minutes. Upon returning, I was handed my registration receipt along with my Nationals package of the usual flyers, banquet ticket, official Nationals decal sheet, and my "Modeler" badge. Similar experiences were echoed amongst numerous other modelers.

Lucky for me, I was one of the 5% that actually got a badge

upon registration. Most others were requested to return in a few hours to wait even longer to get their badges and many never got one at all. Many of those that I spoke with also didn't receive their banquet tickets until additional inquiry was pursued. And most of us never received the Nationals souvenir pin. The explanation at the banquet was that the vendor mistakenly supplied 1000 judges' pins and only 300 entrants' pins. Not sure why OC didn't figure that one out soon enough to correct it. They have promised to mail out the pins to us, once they receive them from the vendor. As for the delay at the desk, we were told that their database had crashed and were entering information manually (this would prove to be the starting point of the terrible awards banquet failure). Again, not sure why they didn't have a backup program or a backup computer system.

The competition hall was very spacious but in many cases the lighting left a lot to be desired. Some lighting was really good, but in many places it was lame. Initially, the layout of the categories was logical and easy to follow... until they started running out of room in many of the categories and needed to add at least ten more tables (and most likely more when all was said and done). By the time tables were added and the many anticipated splits were applied to their categories, the layout had become disjointed and close to impos-

June meeting highlights, clockwise from top: members milling about the Swap Meet looking for that special deal; one busy table; and the meeting in session.



sible to follow. For example, 1/48 single-engine prop splits were predominately along one wall with the original category along another row of tables. Another example: the Group/Chapter and Collections categories were commingled and required looking at the category numbers on *each* entry sheet to figure out which entry belonged where. On the positive side, with the weather as warm as it was, it was very pleasant throughout the entire air-conditioned venue.

Awwwww, the vendors room. Cram-packed with loads of plastic, paints, books, tools, resin, and everything the plastic modeler could desire. This was the one place where everything seemed to go right. Vendors are usually self-sufficient and they were able to make it work without any outside assistance. I was lucky enough to find a few great deals on models (the Special Hobby 1/32 X-15 and P-39D together for \$100.00!), and as usual, I spent way too much money there. We'll be eating hot dogs and PBJ sandwiches for a few months at Plastic Model Mecca.



Some familiar faces at a banquet table

As for security, many participants received color coded wrist bands at registration that were to be worn to gain access into the display room on their assigned days. (I never received any. I assume that is because I was one of the lucky ones to receive a badge). I am aware of numerous occasions where individuals without wrist bands or badges were able to walk right into the display room without ever being challenged. That includes Saturday even during the awards banquet, the moment when a model would most likely be stolen. And there is already a posting on the IPMS/USA discussion forum that three models *were* actually stolen! In addition to that, many unregistered guests were also able to walk right in unchallenged. Not only is this a security issue for the safety of the models but also some significant lost revenue that might have been tapped from the paying public.

And for the icing that fell off of the cake, the awards banquet (or lack thereof). Yes, we were seated only 15 minutes late, but the food was actually good this time. And it was served (at least to our table) in a very timely manner. Then came the awards announcements. We were told that the hosts had thought about it for several weeks and decided to only announce the "Special" and "Best Of" awards and then in order to give us more time at the end of the evening we would be sent over to the contest room where we could see for ourselves which model placed in each category.

Apparently, these guys paid no attention to years of histo-

ry showing that once the awards banquet has been adjourned, the model room turns into a frantic grab-and-snatch, pack-and-run with your models. Sort of like when you turn the lights on in a roach-infested house and they all scatter in chaos to hide. It was possible to see about five categories worth of placings. Anything beyond that requires word of mouth if you are interested in who placed with which model. Otherwise, you have to wait another two months for the Nationals Journal issue to find out.

The awards that they *did* announce had no accompanying photos, digital images, or images of any kind. We know that Mike McDaniel (spelling?) won Best Armor with some sort of Egyptian truck. But in the sea of military models, I have no idea which model that was. No photo. I also came to find out that the real reason behind the lack of presentation was that they had a catastrophic Audio/Visual failure (computer system or database broke down). I would have respected them more had they told us the truth at the banquet and not lied to us with the "Go view the models yourself" story. What a complete letdown.

They offered no form of the traditional Arias Pappas and Bill Devins show, no tongue-in-cheek satire video, no additional entertainment at all. I still can't figure out what the \$50.00 awards banquet ticket was for. The meal was all of about \$20.00 worth. So I figure that they owe me \$30.00 in refund. Not to mention that little IPMS/USA Nationals Convention souvenir pin thingy.

As for fair judging, well, I couldn't really tell you much about that, given the chaotic mass exodus that followed the end of the awards banquet. Too many awards appeared to have not been placed on the table, had been placed next to the wrong model, had already been snatched up by the recipients, or were perhaps even absconded with. In some cases, awards that were misplaced were turned over to the correct recipient.

Since there was no announcement or records divulged about which model and modeler placed in which category, I have no way of reporting on the accuracy of the judging. There are several reports that during the judging of the aircraft categories, rulers were handed out, and aircraft were subjected to "equal wingtip height" scrutiny as a means for



ASM's Chapter Entry, in perfect formation (of course!)

automatic elimination. This explains the unusually fast conclusion of the aircraft division judging (approximately one hour compared to the three or so hours to complete other divisions, like Armor).

What little bits of the announced and confirmed stats and

placings I could note are that 713 modelers registered and there were 2179 entries. We had 14 Albuquerque Scale Modeler club members attend, and they provided 53 entries. One of those was the Group/Chapter entry of the 1/32-scale Academy F/A-18 Blue Angels team. Six aircraft were placed on the table with the coolest bases. In that category, the Craig Hewitt Chapter placed first with their display of Luke Air Force Base aircraft. Because of the frenzied model exodus, I have no idea what placed second and third, as no awards could be found. But I can tell you that the Blue Angels appeared not to have placed.



Dave Straub's scratchbuilt NC4

Perhaps the greatest victory of all ASM members this year goes to our resident scratchbuilding nut job Dave Straub, who won thee (well-earned) Best Aircraft awards with his months-long project build of the NC-4. What the heck is an NC-4? Check the attached photos. It's way cool. Those other club members that were lucky enough to win wood (or find wood placed next to their models) are:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Dave Straub | one 1st place, Best Aircraft |
| John Tate | one 1st place two 3rd places one Out of the Box one Premier award |
| Brian Peck | one 1st place, one 3rd place |
| Dave Miller | one 1st place |
| James Guld | two 2nd places two Premier awards |
| Ken Liotta | one 2nd place one 3rd place |
| Frank Randall | one Out of the Box |
| Patrick Dick | one Premier award |



Other ASM members who also attended included:

- Rick Carver
- Kyle Garber
- Keith Liotta
- Taylor Liotta
- Jack Morris
- Steve Stronach

About four other New Mexico modelers showed up also, but I'm sure you can read about that in the Good Guys' Newsletter elsewhere.

As usual, if I missed listing anyone's awards, my apologies. Please, let us know so that we can announce it at the next club meeting.

In conclusion, I usually make every effort to report the optimistic side of any IPMS business or Nationals event. Unfortunately, this was what I drove away from California with as this year's experience. No sour grapes here— I got wood, I saw great models, and reunited with great modelers. But the rest was more than anyone could attempt to sweep under the rug.

I had been bragging for months to any and all fellow modelers that were considering attending the OC Nationals that they could expect excellence from them. Their performance was a complete letdown and an embarrassment to the National organization. It is my hope that they recognize this, admit it to themselves, and then help the National organization learn from their experiences to prevent this from happening at future IPMS National Conventions. Otherwise, we are in for a ride of uncertainty, deception, and continued disappointment.

BONUS PAGES!

Along with the above article, Ken Liotta supplied several favorites from among the photos he took at the show; some are shown within the article, and you can see the rest starting on page 5 only on the electronic (PDF) version of the newsletter.

If you are not a subscriber to the electronic edition, you can manually download the PDF file of this issue (and back issues as well) from the ASM Web Site at this link:

<http://www.abqscalemodelers.com/asmnewsletter.htm>

Or you can just go to the web site's main page and click on the link marked "Newsletter." Thanks, Ken!

JIM'S SPRUES & REVIEWS

JAMES GULD

Well, since I'm writing this before Nationals, I can't tell you how good it was, so you'll have to wait until next month for my comments on that. What I will blather on about is my last build.

I started in on the Italeri RSO/03. There isn't all that much out there on the RSOs as to reference material, and some of



what is out there is wrong. I found this out the hard way. Oh well, at least I found it out prior to painting.

I have the MK/35 editions book on the RSOs but it is in French with a poorly translated supplement. I was going by what someone else built and I should have known better.

I made a number of upgrades to the kit both using photoetch and some scratchbuilding with styrene. All was well, I thought. I posted pictures up at the Missing-Lynx constructive comments forum, and, lo and behold, found out that the kit has many flaws.

Italeri missed the boat on this one. The cab layout is wrong, the back cargo bed is wrong, and a few details on the chassis are wrong. I did glue the cargo bed down, but I didn't glue the cab down.

One other detail I found out, from a gentleman from Austria who is restoring one, is that they were issued until the fall of 1944. So much for putting it in my next dio set around Coutance, France, at the end of July.

AMS (advanced modelers syndrome) got the better of me and I'll now have to de-construct the RSO. Sometimes it's one step forward and three steps back. I guess I'll get to practice more scratchbuilding skills. I have to change the shape of

the cab interior engine covers and narrow the rear cargo bed to match the cab width, along with making all new sides for the cargo bed and making new bows and braces for the cover tarp. On the chassis I have to change the front tow hooks or delete them, change the rear drive sprocket cover, and change the rear tow pintle and layout of the stowage. Basically I have to re-do the entire kit.

Oh well, better get back to the bench...

Year 2007 Contest Quick Reference Chart

Titles in **blue** indicate contests for "Modeler of the Year" Points

- 5 Jan** **SPECIAL CONTEST #1**
SCI-FI/SCIENCE/REAL SPACE/FANTASY
- 2 Feb** **ASM Swap Meet**—no contest.
- 2 Mar** **Armor**—Any kit/subject/scale.
- 6 Apr** **No Points Contest**
- 4 May** **Ships**—Any kit/subject/scale.
Sponsored Contest: "Best Modern US Aircraft Carrier" (Keith Liotta)
- 1 Jun** **No Points Contest**
- 13 Jul** **Automotive** (any era/scale/subj.)
Sponsored Contest: "Best Mustang" (auto and aircraft) (Mark Soppet)
- 3 Aug** **ASM Swap Meet**—no contest
- 7 Sep** **Figures**—Any kit/subject/scale.
- 5 Oct** **SPECIAL CONTEST #2**
BEST SMALL-SCALE MODEL
- 2 Nov** **Aircraft**—Any kit/subject/scale.
Sponsored Contest: "Best Folded-Wing Aircraft" (Ken Liotta)
- 7 Dec** **No Points Contest**
Plus Model of the Year competition!

Master

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| James Guld | 967 |
| Dave Miller | 674 |
| Mike Blohm | 596 |
| Mike McNichols. | 107 |
| Brian Peck | 37 |
| Ken Liotta. | 6 |
| Ray Ayles | 2 |
| Glen Bingham. | 2 |
| Patrick Dick | 2 |
| James Taylor. | 2 |

Intermediate

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Don Smith | 702 |
| Adrian Montano | 560 |
| Frank Randall | 495 |
| Victor Maestas | 437 |
| Kyle Garber | 285 |
| Rick Carver. | 200 |
| Jeff Frickstad. | 35 |
| Mark Soppet. | 2 |

Basic

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Gil Johnson | 957 |
| John Tribou | 377 |
| Jeannie Garriss | 355 |

Junior

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Kelly Brown | 285 |
| Graham Basha | 235 |
| Shawn Brown | 185 |

ASM MODELER-OF-THE-YEAR POINTS

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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.





