



Turning an SSR into a concept big-rig "Bison"

By Greg Plummer

What do you do when there's a club build of a kit that you wouldn't likely build on your own? That is what this article is about. The club in question here is the Silicon Valley Scale Vehicles group, which sadly is in the defunct column at the time of this writing (we may have been too casual for our own good, but it may come back.) The kit is Revell's new Chevy SSR, suggested by one of our youngest members, Chase.

Revell's Chevy SSR kit in itself is very nice. A newer mold, it's CAD designed and produced in China like their Honda and Focus "Tuner" kits. The body parts are molded in white for easier painting, while the interior is in light gray. The chassis is molded in black, the engine in silver, and a few parts are done in dark gray. It's reminiscent of the old Matchbox kits molded in several colors; it works much better with car kits than it does with planes though.

A well-done chrome tree, a full decal sheet with all the emblems and under hood stickers, and correct stock big and little tires round off the kit. Although it is a glue together kit, the multiple colors and good parts fit mean that younger modelers should have no problem making a nice model out of the box.

Unlike the Tuner series of kits, this one has no extra goodies such as wings and custom wheels - it's strictly stock.

If you're not familiar with the Chevy SSR, it's a bit hard to describe. Originally a show truck built in the late '90s, it was conceived as a retro sports pickup/utility vehicle. Think of it as a cross between a large PT Cruiser and a Chevy pick up. If it sounds strange, it is. It is hard to place it in a particular category. Though it's fast with its standard V8, the SSR is too heavy to be a high performance vehicle, and its small bed and two seats means it lacks truck or even sedan utility. The bulbous retro styling is also a bit off-putting to some. Ultimately it is what it is - a concept vehicle you can buy and drive yourself.

Chevrolet may be wondering if they went too far in putting this unique vehicle into production; sales are quite poor and it faces stiff competition from the likes of the new Mustang, Corvette, and "muscle" pickups

from Dodge. On the other hand, it is refreshing to see automakers starting to take risks like the SSR after a decade of look-alike jelly bean cars. In cases like Cadillac their hand was forced - their customer base was old enough on average to remember having to start cars with a hand crank and Cadillac had to come out with fresh new vehicles or face following its old time buy-



Don't like the subject of your club build? Change it into something completely different. That is Greg did to this Chevrolet SSR. Unlike the SSR, Greg's new vehicle is not suffering from an identity crisis.

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The SVSM May meeting will be held at the Los Altos Library
See the back cover for details

The *Styrene Sheet* is a monthly publication of the Silicon Valley Chapter of the International Plastic Modelers Society (IPMS). Articles and comments should be submitted to John Heck, Editor, P.O. Box 361644, Milpitas, CA 95036, or by E-mail at editor@svsm.org. Excerpts may be published only with written permission of the editor.

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EDITOR'S BRIEF

Hey! Read this. If you read nothing else before you drop this issue of the *Styrene Sheet* in your bathroom garbage can, please note that we will not be meeting in Milpitas this month but at the Los Altos library. Please see the back page of this issue or www.svsm.org for more details.

How to reach people about sudden venue changes like this can be a bit difficult. We have an announcement on the Web site and what you're reading now in the *Styrene Sheet* but neither announcement is terribly proactive. We would like to get together an email list for notifying the membership about any business that cannot wait until the next meeting. We have a few names on this list at this time but it is honestly too small to make use of. If you would like to add your email to such a list see any club officer and give your contact details.

Well, it's already May, which means it's almost July. Another IPMS National Convention is upon us. This years nationals is being held in Atlanta. If you can possibly manage the trip, I recommend you attend. It is a great time if you plan to enter a model or not.

And since it's May, let's not forget to mention the Region 9 Regional shin-dig being put on by our conjoined-twin club, the Fremont Hornets. See page three —> of this issue or pester Mark Schynert for more information. You can also pester Roy Sutherland, but do that just for fun.

Something slipped under the radar last year. At least it did for me. I was flipping through the IPMS Journal as one is inclined to do and noticed on the back cover an advertisement for the 2005 Tamiya/Con. Tamiya/Con, if you are not aware, is the annual contest that the Tamiya

company puts on at their US headquarters in Aliso Viejo, California. Aside from a well-run show and the opportunity to meet the folks responsible for all those great models, it is a chance for four entrants to win a trip to Japan courtesy of Mr. Tamiya.

Water marked in the background of the ad in the Journal were the names of past winners. Greg Plummer was a winner in 2003, as you are aware, and after I found his name I noticed Masa Narita's name just below Greg's. Our own Masa Narita won the Master Modeler award at the 2004 Tamiya/Con. This award is not just the first place in its category (which he also won) but, in the eyes of Mr. Tamiya, is the best example of modeling of all the entrants. For this, Masa was awarded an impressive trophy and a trip to Japan.

Masa's model was a hypothetical naval 1/350 scale diorama of the Missouri accompanying the Hornet and Fletcher on its raid on Tokyo in 1942 led by Jimmy Doolittle. To view images of Masa's diorama and to read how you can build one just like it, visit his Web site at <http://www.naritafamily.com/Scalemodel/contest/contest.htm>. Here you can see many of his other excellent models.

To view photos of our trip to this years Tamiya/Con, visit the "Model Shows" section SVSM gallery on the Website. Tamiya had arranged for a USMC M1A1 Abrams to be displayed in the parking lot. Many photos of the M1 are in the "Armor Walkarounds" section of the very same Web site.

- The Editor

CONTEST CALENDAR

May 21, 2005: The **IPMS/Fremont Hornets** present the **Tri-City Spring Classic** at the Newark Community Center, 35501 Cedar Blvd., Newark, CA 94560. For more information, contact Mark Schynert at mass22@earthlink.net with the words, "Tri-City Contest" in the subject line, or call him at (510) 769-8316.

June 18, 2005: **IPMS/Manila** hosts **AcademyCon** at the Ali Mall at Cubao, Quezon City, the Philippines. For more information, e-mail Noel Carpio at aec-graphics@aol.com.

July 20-23, 2005: **IPMS Metro Atlanta** hosts the **2005 IPMS USA National Convention**, at the Cobb Galleria Centre, Atlanta, Georgia. For more information visit the 2005 National Web site at <http://www.ipmsusa2005.org/>

August 13: **Kings County Scale Modelers** hold the **First Annual Kings County Classic** at the Lemoore Civic Auditorium, 435 C St., Lemoore California. The theme is Those Fabulous '40s. For more information contact Cheryl Wormerdam at (559) 904-3290 or e-mail her at cherylwormerdam@sbcglobal.net.

September 10: **The Reno High Rollers** host their **Annual Model Contest** at the Desert Heights Elementary School, 13948 Mt. Bismark, Reno/Stead, Western States, NV 89512. For more information contact Neil Hulse at KNK41063@aol.com.

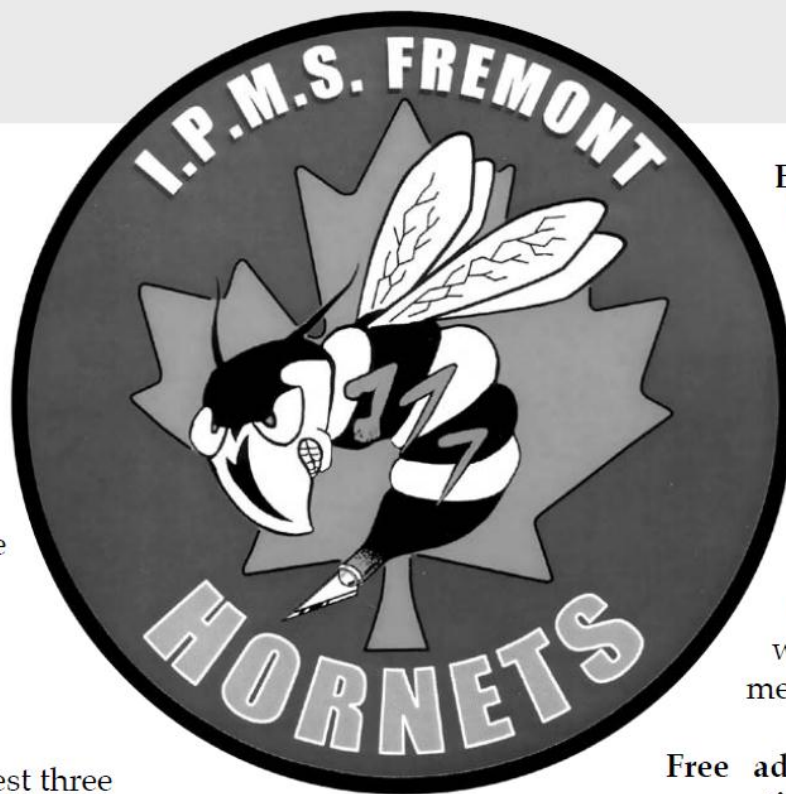
October 8: **IPMS Santa Rosa** hosts its annual **Scale Model Expo.** at the Sebastopol Veterans Memorial Building, 282 S High St, Sebastopol, CA. For more information contact Greg Reynolds at ipmsgr@sbcglobal.net.

*IPMS/Fremont Hornets &
the Newark Community Center Proudly Cosponsor –*

TRI-CITY REGION 9 CONTEST

Scale Model Contest and Exhibition

Saturday, May 21, 2005



45 Categories –

- Aircraft
- Automobiles
- Figures
- Ships
- Military Vehicles
- Space & Sci-fi

Special Awards–

- Best Aircraft or Space Vehicle
- Best Armor
- Best Civilian Land Vehicle
- Best Figure or Robot
- Tri-City Award for best three of a kind—three thematically-related models by a single contestant in the same category (i.e.: Chevy low-riders, 1/72 Fw 190s, Star Trek ships, Aloha airliners)

Plus vendors, a raffle and a free Make 'n Take for children 15 and under!

Entry fees–

\$5 for modelers 18 and older, plus \$1 for each model after the first two entries.

\$1 for modelers 17 and younger with no charge for additional entries.

\$2 discount for seniors with a current IPMS membership

Free admission for all non-competitors.

**The Newark Community
Center, 35501 Cedar Blvd.,
Newark, California**

9 a.m.–Registration Opens

Noon–Registration Closes

1 p.m.–Judging Begins

3:30 p.m.–Awards Ceremony

For vendor information call–
Jim Priete

Weekdays 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
(925) 323-1845.

Tables are \$40 until April 1
\$45 until May 20
\$50 on the day of the event.

*For more information, contact Mark Schynert at (510) 796-3331 or email him at
mass22@earthlink.net with 'Tri-City Contest' in the subject line.*

“The Invaders” – A Quinn Martin Production

By Kent McClure

In the late 1960s, television entered into the first golden age of science fiction programming. Leading the way was Star Trek (1966-69 on NBC); Desilu Studio’s pioneering drama of the voyage of the Starship Enterprise and her captain, James Tiberius Kirk.

Although sometimes referred to as a “Wagon Train to the Stars,” Star Trek became the only television program that ever successfully returned to network programming after a long-term hiatus and spawned multiple successful sequels -- ST: The Next Generation; ST: Deep Space 9; ST: Voyager; and, currently in its last season, ST: Enterprise.

But Star Trek wasn’t the only sci-fi show that invaded prime time TV in the late ‘60s. Who could forget the sound of the pinging sonar that dominated the opening music for “Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea” (1964-68, Irwin Allen Productions, ABC); or the robotic warning of “Danger, Will Robinson!” usually followed by the whining of Doctor Smith on “Lost in Space” (1965-68, Irwin Allen Productions, CBS). Do you remember what TV show had the sound of a cat meowing in its opening? -- “Land of the Giants” (1968-70, Irwin Allen Productions, ABC). What about time travel (in a non-Whovian way)? -- “Time Tunnel” (1966-67, Irwin Allen Productions, ABC).

If you were a kid, there was a good chance that you got your weekly (or even daily) sci-fi dose from Fireball XL-5, Stingray!, The Thunderbirds, or Johnny Quest. (The first three were Gary Anderson’s super-marionettes, produced in the UK from 1962-66, and shown in the S.F. Bay Area on the Captain Satellite Show. Johnny Quest was shown on ABC TV from 1964-65). And of course, there was the “sci-fi” classic Batman (1966-68, the only show on network TV that aired twice a week).

What was really great about that time period was the fact that model kits related to most of these shows were produced. AMT had the Star Trek franchise, but Aurora had just about everything else from the U.S. market. They produced the Seaview and the Flying Sub from Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea; the robot, the Jupiter 5, and a diorama scene of the

Cyclops about to throw a boulder on the rover; the spaceship from Land of the Giants; and the Batmobile, the Batcycle, the Batplane, and the Batcopter. Luckily for those of us who build sci-fi kits, most of these have been reissued under the Polar Lights label and the Thunderbirds kits have been issued under the Imai label.

But there was one other sci-fi TV show that has a modeling link to it. It was one lost night on a lonely country road, looking for a shortcut that was never found... “It began with a closed deserted diner and a man too long without sleep to continue his journey. It began with the landing of a craft from another galaxy. Now, David Vincent knows that the invaders are here, that they have taken human form. Somehow he must convince a disbelieving world that the nightmare has already begun”.... If you recognize those lines, then you know that

the next lines were “The Invaders – A Quinn Martin Production. Tonight’s guest stars are ...”

The Invaders was a story of one man, architect David Vincent (played by Roy Thinnes), and his attempts to warn the world that the Earth had been invaded by aliens—aliens that looked just like us and whose aim was to make Earth their new home. But David Vincent knew how to tell them apart from us. The invaders

didn’t bleed—there was no pulse or heartbeat. They were emotionless. And some of them had a mutated fourth finger. But he could never show anyone the dead body of an alien as proof because the body would incinerate when the alien died.

The Invaders first aired on January 10, 1967, on ABC. The hour-long show ran for 43 episodes, the last one airing on March 26, 1968. Fifteen different directors steered the series during its life, with Paul Wendkos directing the most episodes with nine to his credit. The actors and actresses that appeared on the show is quite impressive, many of them to star in their own TV shows later – Joseph Campanella, Peter Graves, Ed Asner, Suzanne Pleshette, Michael Constantine, Diane Muldaur, Burgess Meredith, Wayne Rogers, and Ted Knight. Others would become Hollywood staples – James Whitmore, Gene Hackman, Sally Kellerman, Roscoe Lee Brown, Will Geer, and Roddy McDowell. Ironically, less than a handful of the actors ever appeared in more than one episode—Ed



The Invader's space craft. The Invaders first aired on January 10, 1967 on ABC. The hour-long show ran for 43 episodes. The model was first released by Aurora in 1968.

Asner twice, Suzanne Pleshette twice, and veteran character actor Kent Smith who appeared an amazing 12 times.

Being an Earth-based sci-fi series, there wasn't a whole lot of neat special effects gadgetry that would have lent itself to modeling -- except for one. The UFO --the wonderful alien spacecraft that started it all. Aurora began producing it in 1968 (no real surprise there). When Aurora faded into oblivion, the molds for the UFO kit went to the modeling equivalent of Area 51. When Monogram started up their SSP program, they somehow got their hands on the Invader UFO and began marketing it as one of their 1995 releases. The only differences between the two releases were that the original Aurora release had the clear engine nacelles (Part 19) molded in transparent red, while the '95 Monogram release had the part molded in clear plastic. The funny part about it was that in the show the piece was actually blue.

There are not a whole lot of parts in the kit -- only 33, of which four are crew members (and not very well sculpted) and five are clear pieces. The kit is listed as 1:72 scale. Not having a real UFO to draw upon for dimensions, I can only say that it looks right based on the 1:72 scale figures that I have. I don't remember what the retail price was but it is currently going for anywhere from \$10 - \$25 on eBay. If you want a real shocker, an original Aurora version of the kit is listed at \$195 on eBay. On the other hand, I got my kit as a result of trading in a Fremont raffle prize (I wanted to build a no brainer kit for fun).

That was sometime in either late 2003 or early 2004. It sat on the shelf, behind NUMEROUS unstarted projects (my own Area 51), until sometime in the late summer of '04. I had



This crew member is stripping paint from the water closet doors while the crew member on the inside is reapplying paint.

been working on finishing up my Spaced Taxi and, having such a fun time on that, I thought that I would take a crack at the UFO. I knew that I wasn't going to build it stock. There's just something in my nature that won't allow me to do that. One thing that I knew I wanted to do was to put better crew figures in it. I have plenty of 1:72 scale plastic figures that I've picked up for war-gaming purposes, and just so happened to have the Airfix sets for RAF Crew, Luftwaffe Crew and USAAF Crew (destined for a gaming army base on Hogan's Heroes). I sorted through these until I found a reasonable assortment of officer types and real worker types -- five figures in all. Now I know that there is only a total of four "seats" in the kit, but who's counting.

The kit parts were given the standard soapy water bath before anything was even cut off the sprues. Being an older kit, there were some rather obvious pin ejector marks on some of the pieces. Most of these were filled with Green Stuff and blended in or just sanded into oblivion. But, a couple of them were in just the right spot to double as something else (more about that later). Another quick cleaning and it was time to start painting. Well, almost. There was the question of what color to make the interior. This took some consideration. Assuming that the UFO did not have instantaneous travel capabilities, the crew would be stuck in it for a while. As a result, the color of the interior would have an impact on their psychological well-being. This is a problem that submarine crews face. I have heard that a pastel light green (as



The Captain and Number One watch Star Trek as the rest of the crew works. Kent conscripted figures from Airfix's RAF, USAAF and Luftwaffe Ground Crew.

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The birth of three belly tank Dry-Lake racers

By Steve Travis

I know that you model aircraft builders know what a belly tank is, they were also known as drop tanks or wing tanks. For those who may not know, these tanks were external fuel tanks that were added to the underside of the fuselage or wing hard points on fighter aircraft. By adding these tanks gave the planes enough extra fuel to allow the P-51 Mustangs and P-38 Lightnings to escort B-17 and B-24 bombers to their targets as far away as Germany, and return back to base in England. The tanks were used on the outbound leg of the sortie, and dropped when the tanks were empty.

Because of the unique design of each World War II fighter, each type of plane had its own specific belly tank. The largest of these tanks were used on the P-38 Lightning. It was designed to carry 315 gallons of fuel, and was 36 inches in diameter at its widest point. Many of the smaller tanks that were used on the P-51 Mustangs and F4U Corsairs were 24 inches in diameter at their widest and could carry 165 gallons of fuel. All of these tanks were constructed of aluminum for lightness, and because they were expendable, the tanks were made in great quantities as cheaply as possible.

A gentleman by the name of Bill Burke is credited as being the father of the Belly Tank Racer. He went to the "lakes" for the first time in 1934 and raced roadsters and modifieds. His racing was interrupted by the war, and like so many of the racers who supported the war effort, Bill joined the service. He entered the Coast Guard and was stationed in the South Pacific. It was there, while standing watch on a pier, he looked at a barge full of belly tanks and was inspired to build one of the sleekest and simplest racers of all time. "There was this barge full of wing tanks," says Burke. "I got to looking at them and thought, 'Holy Toledo-that looks like it would make a wonderful streamliner.' I went over on the barge to measure a tank. Then I was sure one would be ideal for the dry lakes."

After Burke was discharged in 1946, he returned home to Los Angeles. The belly tank streamliner idea never left his head though. So he took a drive down Alameda Street in Los Angeles to the junkyards where he and other Southern California hot rodders found old cars and parts before the war. Along

with the junkyards there were now surplus yards known as "bone yards" where derelict aircraft and parts were stored. He spotted some surplus belly tanks, bought one for \$7.00 and started to build his first streamliner. The tank he bought was one of the smaller 165 gallon varieties. Because of its size, he put the engine, a little Ford 4 banger, in the front. "It was so small I had to crouch in the back behind the motor," says Burke. "I attached a bicycle seat to the torque tube. That's what I sat on." Burke had to lean over the engine to hold the steering wheel with one hand while he manually set the throttle with the other. The drivers used a modified throttling device found on small outboard motors of the day that allowed trolling on lakes and streams. By gripping the squeeze handle you drew a locking spade out of a cog groove allowing you to ratchet the handle around, one way for more speed, the opposite way

for less. When the desired speed was achieved, you relaxed the squeeze handle and the spade settled into another cog groove. There was a direct link between the clutch and the rear end. The pull of a lever engaged the clutch. When the throttle was no longer needed, it was disengaged and the free hand was used to pull on the brake lever. Burke quickly realized that modifications would be needed. But for now at least he had



Steve's red belly tanker is a combination of a vac-u-formed body with extensive kit bashing and scratch building.

a streamliner. Burke returned to the same bone yard on Alameda Street and bought a larger P-38 tank. The cost? \$15.00. "It was bigger and gave me enough room to allow the driver to sit up front and to put the engine in the rear." This mid-engine (engine between driver and rear axle) configuration became the standard for belly tank design. Because of its extended tear drop shape, the largest cross section was near the center of the tank. Most of the room was used for the engine, and the driver was cramped in the front. In later years, a few competitors added several inches of length in the center. Burke raced his own belly tank that was driven by Wally Parks, and he built many belly tank cars for other competitors.

On August 29, 1948, Wally Parks set the one-way record of 153.32 MPH in a belly tanker built by Burke for his friend and competitor, Don Francisco.

To give you an idea of how much faster an aerodynamic belly tanker was over roadsters and modifieds, Fred Lobello drove his '32 Ford roadster powered by a Riley 4 port 4 banger

to 96 MPH then put that same engine in a belly tanker and reached a speed of 116 MPH. The additional 20 miles per hour was gained strictly through the difference in aerodynamics between the roadster and the belly tank.

Building a Belly Tank model wasn't the easiest thing to do because there just wasn't a kit available. For my first tanker, I actually used the nose cone from an Estes Model Rocket. I streamlined the parachute attachment end of the nose cone by trimming off the attachment ring end and cementing the "pointy" end of a small plastic Easter egg in its place. I kit bashed the engine, rear end, the wheels and tires and scratch built a posable front axle, all of the radius and connecting rods, the water and fuel tanks and the shifting and steering mechanisms. All I had for a reference at the time was a picture I had found in an R.C. car magazine. The finished model is a fairly good representation of a belly tanker although it more closely resembles a true streamliner what with its tapered shape as opposed to the more bulbous tear drop shape of a belly tanker.

Before I started my second tanker model, I bought the books; *The American Hot Rod* by Dean Batchelor and *The Birth of Hot Rodding, The Story of the Dry Lakes Era* by Robert Genat and Don Cox. Both books are crammed full of outstanding pictures for referencing and great stories about tankers as well as other dry lake racers and the men who built and drove them.

When I attended the last of the Lower Left Coast Model Car Shows, I found a vendor who had vac-u-formed a belly tanker body which came with upper and lower body halves as well as different head rests and clear wind screens. Also at the same show, Joe Curtis of Fremont Racing Specialties was offering very nice cast resin bodies for tankers. I bought a few of these bodies from each of these guys and I have built one of the vac-u-form versions. Once again I kit bashed and scratch built what was needed to complete the model. On this go-round though I used extensive references from the afore mentioned books. This little model is about as true in detail as I can make it and I think it looks quite nice. While at the Tri-City Classic model contest I was approached by a gentleman wanting to know if my little red belly tank racer was the kit he had seen on the internet. I told him it wasn't and explained how it came to be. I was very curious however to see what he was talking about, so as soon as I got home from the contest I hit the web typing in "belly tank model" and 'viola' there it was, an entire belly tank kit. It was resin and white metal. It may have been complete but it is the worst resin kit I have ever come across. Considering it is the only complete kit available, you tend to roll with the punches and do the best you can. Because the resin is of such poor quality, I substituted metal, plastic and rubber wherever possible. I wouldn't recommend this kit because it is rather pricey (\$79.95) for such a poor offering, but again, it is the only game in town. I can only hope that in the near future a major manufacturer will come forth with a decent rendition.



Photos from Dean Batchelor's book, *The American Hot Rod* and Robert Genat and Don Cox's *The Birth of Hot Rodding, the Story of the Dry Lakes Era*, had inspirational photos for Steve's second belly tanker project.



Steve's second attempt at building a true belly tanker model yielded this red beauty. Steve believes this little car model is his best effort at scratch building the subject. It was so convincing, in fact, that it was accused of being a belly tanker kit.

Chevrolet 1:25 SSR big-rig conversion

Continued from page 1

ers into the great beyond. Hence the Escalade.

As you may be able to tell, I don't much care for the looks of the SSR, though the full size items look all right in a deep purple Chevy offers. As I wasn't going to build the kit stock, my plan was to do something radical. I remembered Chevy used to make a full on cab-over big rig called the Bison; there were model kits of the big Chevy back in the '70s when CB radios and trucking themes were all the rage. So the idea gelled in my head (which is full of Jell-O) - use the SSR body to make a postmodern cab-over new Bison, or in this case the Bison using the double "s" from the SSR. It was going to be quick and dirty; a deadline was coming up after all and the intent of this model was that of a styling exercise rather than a full detail fictitious replica, to use an oxymoron.

Eyeballing the SSR body, I figured that I could use the back half glued on upside down onto the front half to form the basic cab. Wasting no time with sketches or the like, I cut the SSR body just behind the front fenders and in front of the rear fenders, eliminating a center section. With a little fitting, the rear fender/bed unit was glued inverted onto the front section. Plastic card formed the back wall. The rear wheel openings were now on top of the cab body; they were filled in with plastic card also to make the doors.

By this time I had also bought an old 1/32 Monogram Peterbuilt 359 snap-tite kit off of eBay to use as the donor chassis for the model. Since the Peterbuilt was a traditional engine forward and not a cab-over design, the chassis had to be shortened by an inch and a half or so. Otherwise it was built as intended and painted a dark purple blue. I had wanted to use European style truck wheels for the model, but the 10 hole jobs in the Monogram kit were good enough after being painted aluminum. Viola - a finished rolling chassis.

Going back to the cab, fillets were added to the front corner areas to blend in the top and bottom sections, which, not surprisingly, did not fit that well. In the same thought, a front



Plastic card was used to form the back wall of the cab. The rear wheel wells were also filled with plastic card.

plate of plastic card was added above the grill. The bodywork was then smoothed in using Bondo's finest grade of polyester putty, which isn't that fine for modeling use but is much, much cheaper than Tamiya's. The doors were scribed in and a set of grab rails were added and now the basic cab was ready for the usual process of priming, filling the spots missed, sanding, repriming, and so forth.



The chassis for the conversion was adapted from an old 1:32 Monogram Peterbuilt 359 that Greg found on eBay. The mud flap logos were printed on paper and glued in place.

I needed an interior at this point. Previously I had cut out the bed bottom, which you'll remember was on top of the cab if you kept track of the assembly. The passable interior from the snap kit was used, painted flat black for maximum hiding effect. A large dash top was made from plastic card to fill the void between the 1/24 scale pickup bed bottom sides and the 1/32 scale big rig interior. Never thought you'd see a sentence like that in a modeling article, did you? Anyway, the cab now needed a top. The wind deflector from the Monogram snap kit was used as is, with back and side supports jury rigged from plastic card. The results on the top were clunky, but clunky is in as far as new car and truck styling is

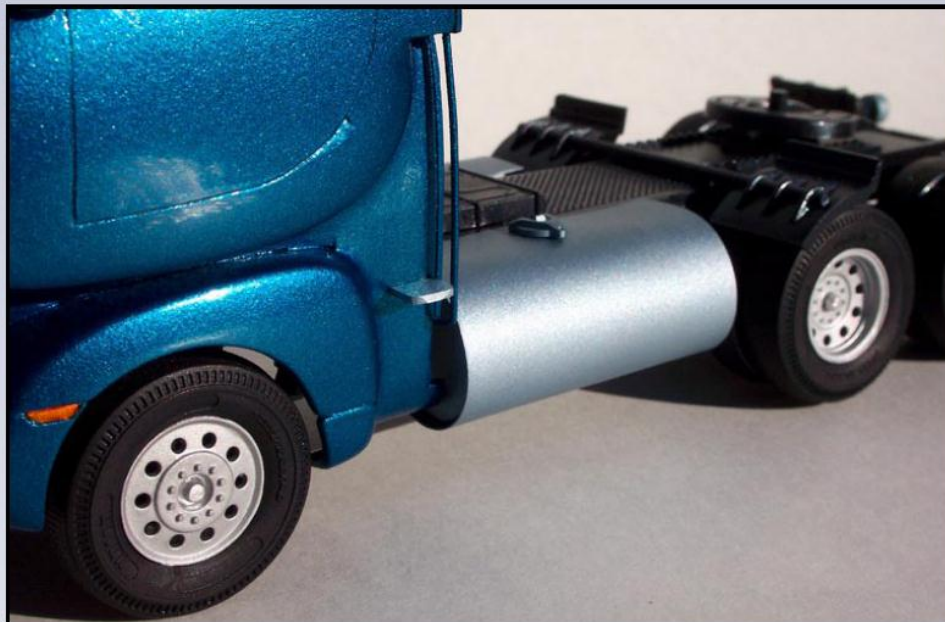
concerned. Look at the Honda Pilot.

The cab with a masked off interior and the still separate cab top were sprayed with teal blue automotive touchup paint. I forget what the exact color and brand was, and I'm not going to get up and go look right now. A couple of coats of clear lacquer were then sprayed on. This crazed the plastic on the top a little, but remember — quickie project. A polishing finished off the paint job.

SSR kit headlights were added on, and I was about to add the grill "crossbar" when I found it was missing. No matter, I scratch built a shorter cross bar that didn't cut across the headlamps like the stock one did. The cab base was then epoxied onto the chassis over the front wheels. The snap kit fuel tanks were used, but they had a horrible seam on them, being a snap kit. They were quickly wrapped in thin sheet plastic and airbrushed a light metallic blue. By the way, the fuel tank caps were formally strut tower tops from a Tamiya rally car kit.

Before the cab top went on, a windshield and side windows of some sort had to be made. I made them all out of a single sheet of clear plastic; with a pair of curved black wires representing the windshield / door pillar frame (visibility should be good with A pillars that thin ...). The "glass" was glued, okay, taped to the cab roof with the bottom edge of the windshield simply sliding into a gap I left between the dashboard and the body. The cab roof attached at the rear wall. I just remembered I forgot to put windshield wipers on this thing, so they're hidden I guess.

The cab top looked like it ended too abruptly, so I made an

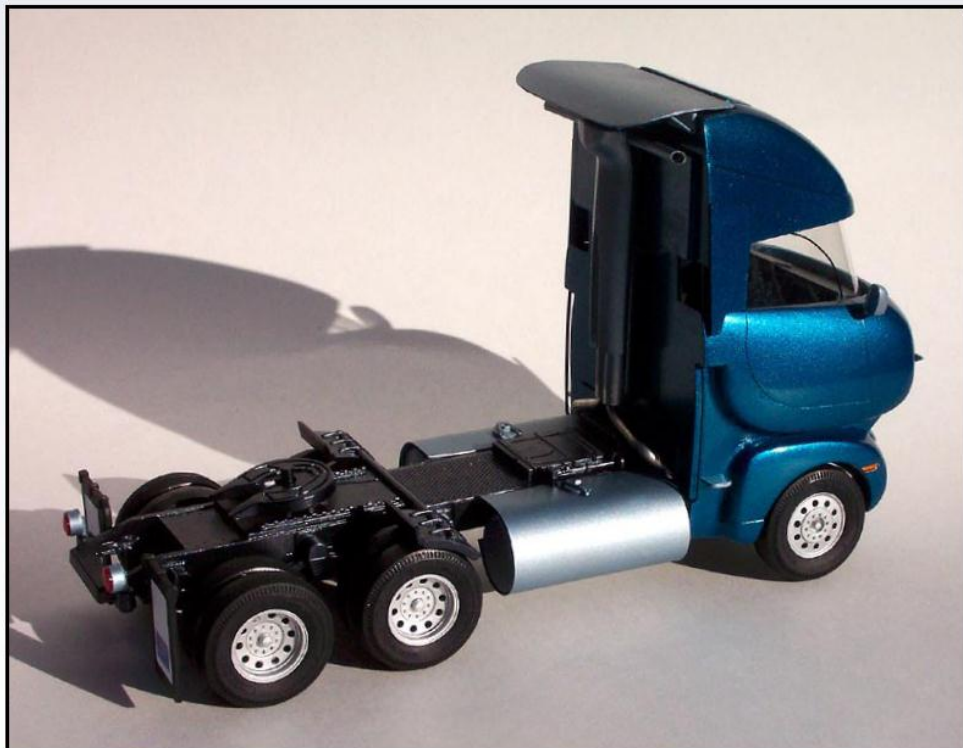


The Monogram 1:32 Peterbuilt fuel tanks and wheels were used. Having horrible seams on them, Greg wrapped the tanks in thin sheet plastic and painted them a light metallic blue.

extension to it out of plastic card with plastic rod supports. SSR rear view mirrors were swapped left to right—they looked a bit like ears after they were glued on. Both were painted in the same light blue as the fuel tanks. A "burning man" exhaust system was made from the rocker panels of the SSR kit glued together with aluminum tubing used to make the actual pipes. The central exhaust system helped hide the fact that the back of the cab was nothing but flat plastic card. The front of the cab also had a large expanse of nothing, so here I added bison "horns" made from sheet plastic. The SSR kit's Chevy bowtie emblem went in the middle of this. There, now it looked like a big blue bison head on. So cute...

Tail lamps were fashioned from aluminum tube and the SSR's clear red tail light units. As a final touch, I printed "BISSON" logos on paper, trimmed them, and glued them onto the rear mud flaps. I brought the finished kit to what turned out to be one of the last meetings of the Silicon Valley Scale Vehicles club. Typical comments were "That's from the SSR kit?", "You would build it like that," and just plain old "That's different."

Along with a few other finished and not quite complete projects, Andy Kellock also brought his well-styled SSR Nomad, and Bill Bauer showed his slick racing panel version. It's too bad the club that inspired this group build is no longer, but on a positive note its last hurrah resulted in some fine models, and mine too.



Greg severed his SSR body and stacked the rear upsidedown on the front to create the basic cab shape.

Greg Plummer has been building plastic models on and off since 1973. His interests include most everything. He has been a member of SVSM since 1998.

Modeling Aurora's 1968 "Invaders" space ship

Continued from page 5

used in hospitals) is a very calming color, but I just couldn't bring myself to use that. So I looked toward light blues. I finally settled on Polly S Russian Underside Blue. But before I could paint, there was one small item that I needed to do. I wanted the floor to have some sort of texture, but didn't want to use "waffle-plate." What I came up with was to use some fine grit sandpaper (about 600 grade). I cut it out and superglued it to the floor, then sprayed away.

One nice thing about the kit is that all of the interior walls come separate, so painting and detailing them is an easy task (although the same feature has a rather serious drawback that I found out later). There are plenty of large instruments and switches that got picked out. A super-detailer would probably replace the switches with scratch-built examples, but I just wasn't in the mood to do so. Certain panels got picked out in gray, other knobs with red, yellow or green. There's a series of small truncated pyramids that are lined up vertically. Each of these was painted green and yellow. After they had dried, a light coat of Tamiya Transparent Yellow was brushed over them. There were a couple of large circles on the main (commander's?) panel and one of the back wall panels that I thought were ejector pin marks. My first thought was to fill them in (of course!), but then there was just something about their locations that made me take a different track. I decided to let them represent speakers and painted them flat black. That got me looking at the panels from a different perspective. One panel had a large raised piece that reminded me of a TV screen. For those of you who remember, back in the '60s TVs were pieces of furniture. The larger ones had a "wood" finish and that was the look I wanted. So I painted the outer portion a dark brown. Then I went on a "Web hunt" for a classic '60s program to put on the big screen. The result – Fred Flintstone!

Emboldened by the result, I turned my attention back to the commander's station. Smack dab in the middle of the panel was two square panels that had a smaller panel just outboard of them. These smaller panels had ejector pin marks right in the middle of them -- a perfect arrangement for TVs. The ejector pin marks became speakers and another

Web search yielded two sci-fi icons from the '60s – William Shatner as Captain Kirk and Tom Baker as Doctor Who.

The layout of the UFO interior is somewhat quirky. It has four major rooms (two of the rooms take up about a third of the interior each, with the remaining two taking up about 1/6 each), but right in the center is a smaller rectangular room. I have no clue as to what this room could be, but plenty of suggestions were made (more of that later). Well, there are multiple doors leading from each of the major rooms and I wanted to show these in various states of refurbish. As a result, some of the doors were painted RLM grey. Others were painted in a greenish blue silver to represent metal doors that had all of the paint stripped off of them. A couple of doors had an area painted yellow to represent a primer coat.

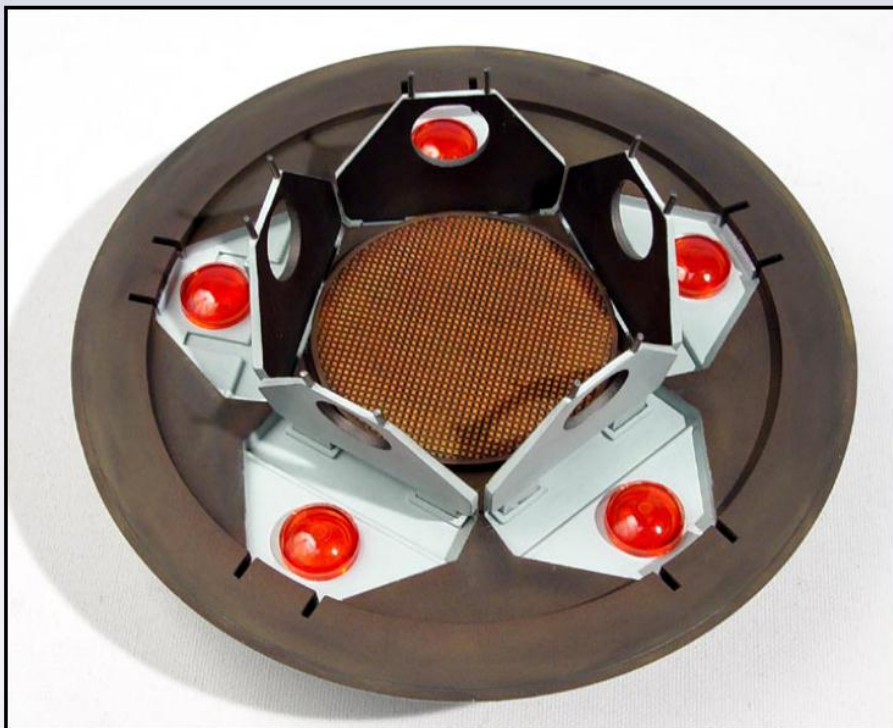
When tired of working on the interior, I would work on

the lower hull. The entire lower hull and the outer side of the landing gear were sprayed with Testor's non buffing burnt iron. There is an inner raised ring with a pebbled surface that I assume is the engine. This area was painted flat black and heavily drybrushed with various shades of orange and finally topped off with a very light shading of yellow. The inside of the landing gear and the gear bay was painted RLM 76 light grey. The struts themselves were painted a dark stainless steel color.

In the gear bay there are five

slightly raised rings. These rings are the locators for where the transparent pieces go. Strange as it might seem, the transparent pieces are listed as the engine nacelles. Yeah, right. The instructions called for these to be a transparent red, so I stained the interior of the pieces using Tamiya's transparent red paint. I painted the inside of the raised rings with gold but that was really an unnecessary action on my part. It seemed to make the transparencies brighter.

The upper hull and the top were painted with Testor's non buffing aluminum. This was the first time that I have used this metalizer and I like the results, especially since I can handle the finished product. This was important, since I still had to put the two hull halves together and the top had to remain removable to show off the interior. A combination of liquid and tube glue was used to accomplish



The underside of completed kit with landing gear installed, engine nacelles and weathered undersurfaces. Note the drybrushed orange over black area of the main engine(?).

this. The fit was not perfect and a gap of varying width resulted. Puttying and sanding to correct this was out of the question because that would have meant respraying the burnt iron (a real masking nightmare). So I used white glue to fill the seam. After it had dried, I used a combination of rust color, grayish brown and black pastel chalks from a model railroad weathering set that I have and weathered the entire exterior undersurface. With that completed, my attention was turned to the upper hull to carefully examine it for any scratches or nicks that might have been missed prior to painting. Using pastel chalks, these would be disguised as damage from meteorite.

Part of the finishing touches meant installing the interior walls and the four pieces that creates that strange central rectangle. When I had brought the still-in-process kit into the club, I got teased about where the bathroom was on the UFO. One of the resultant retorts was that there wasn't any – why do you think they kept visiting us so much? I had thought of making that inner rectangle the bathroom and even installing a small toilet (the old fashion chain type), but there simply wasn't enough room in there to do so. I looked at the interior and a thought struck me about the wall panel that had a double door on it and cabinet about halfway up the wall. The cabinet made me think of a medicine cabinet. And with a door right up against an exterior wall, where the heck did that door lead to? Why the answer was simple. Paint WC (for Water Closet) in white on the double door and put a little placard saying "FLUSH" next to it and there's your answer.

Satisfied with answering this burning mystery, the interior



The interior color is Polly S Russian Underside Blue. Kent assembled and finished the interior only to have problems getting a proper fit once it was introduced into the ship's hull.

walls were given a wash of flat black enamel. To save time, I decided to just put the wash where I wanted shadows to be rather than giving the entire wall a wash. Result? Do you ever have one of those days when you should have stayed in bed? Disaster. The usual method of drybrushing to create depth didn't cover the black wash at all. I had to use a fine-tipped brush and full-strength paint to repaint the areas where I needed to cover up the wash. (Do I hear a voice in my head saying, "This was supposed to be a fun project?")

Setbacks have a way of directing your attention elsewhere. Since the washing/painting of the interior resulted in downtime for drying, I turned my attention to the crew figures. I ended up with three figures from the Luftwaffe ground crew set (one spray painting something, one refueling, and an officer standing around – no comments from the peanut gallery), and one each from the USAAF and RAF sets (USAAF mechanic on his back wrenching something and a RAF ground crewman pushing a cart or a wing or something). Mold lines were cleaned up and then they were carefully removed from their stands.

The figures were washed in soapy water just before painting. The two Luftwaffe and the USAAF ground crewmen were painted in orange jumpsuits/fatigues. The refueling figure will represent the poor sap that has to remove the paint from the doors using sonic waves and a vacuum hose. The airbrush guy is repainting the doors. The USAAF guy is trying to fix that little problem in the main control panel. The other two "officer" figures are just doing what officers do best. They were given uniforms of light gray pants and dark



What else is there to do in space but watch television? Kent used images of popular shows of the era to show on the various video monitors around the ship. Here Fred Flintstone verably abuses Wilma one more time.

gray tunics. After they had dried for at least a week, they were given a wash of flat black enamel. A day later they were drybrushed to bring out the shadows. They were put aside until the interior was installed.

This brings us back to the next crisis point. The interior walls can best be described as having a tight sloppy fit. By this I mean when you install the doors that form the short part of the interior rectangle it creates a very tight fit. But it also results in some frightening gaps at the wall junctions. Since everything was already painted, I really could not use Milliput or Squadron Green Stuff. Instead I used white glue to fill the gaps. "Sanding" of the joint was done by using a Q-Tip dipped in hot water to smooth down the white glue. This was a time consuming effort since white glue has a tendency to shrink as it dries. Much later, I discovered one other minor glitch. When the walls were glued, I forgot about the fit of the top. It seems that the lip that was provided for the top to fit snugly is not wide enough. Which means I have to go back and break the bond, readjust the walls to compensate for the top, reglue and refill the seams. Yuk.

Well, let's see where we stand. Top and bottom of the hull are attached – check. Landing gear attached – check. Interior attached – check. Crewmen painted – check. Hmm, that means all that's left is to put the crew in place. Here, I ran into another small problem. I was going to use Plastix for the figures. It is a gel type of superglue that comes with a sort of catalyst that helps it to adhere to soft plastic. Well, I



The three "chairs" in the crew's area are actually the rejuvenation chambers that the Invaders have to frequent.

discovered that while I had plenty of the catalyst available, the gel had ceased to be a gel -- it was now a rock. I had to fall back to using Plastic CA. This meant that I would have one chance (and only one chance) to position the figures or risk glue marks on the deck. The guy on his back and the two officers wasn't that tricky, but the other two had potential problems. The crewman who is spray painting in the middle rectangle had to fit in at just the right angle to look realistic. The other crewman, who is using a sonic blaster to remove the paint, had to have the hose centered in a black dot in the deck that was acting as an exposed access panel.

Once in place, there were only the little touchups here and there before I declared the kit complete. This was a good thing since it was now about 10 the night before our contest, and from cruel experience I knew the further I got on the other side of 11, the closer I flirted with disaster. So away went all of the tools, into the cabinet the kit went for ACP (Anti-Cat Protection), and I was off to bed. Now I didn't win any prizes on Sunday for the kit, but that's okay. If it was able to cause people to take a second glance at it, then I'm satisfied. Besides, building is for fun and in the long run the only one you have to please is yourself.

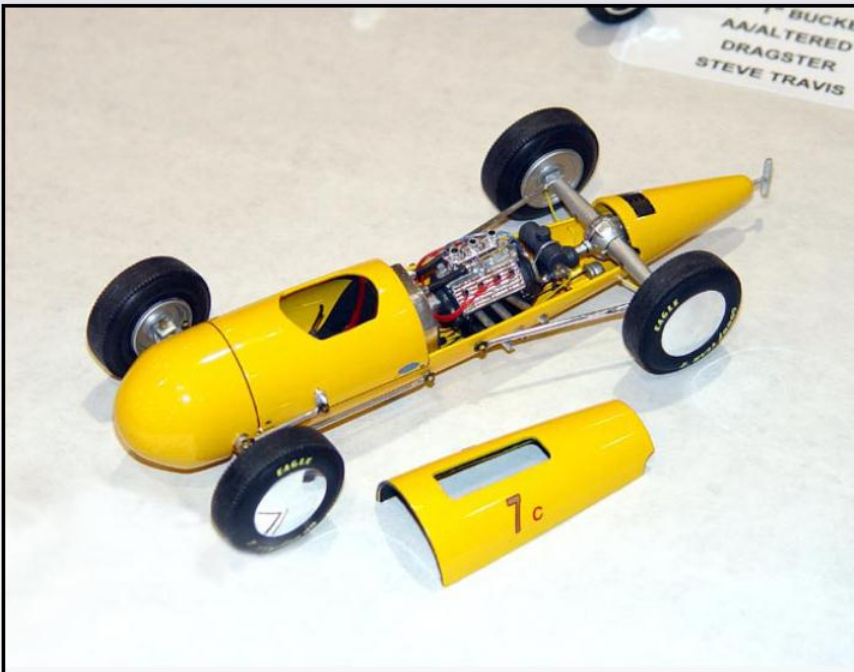
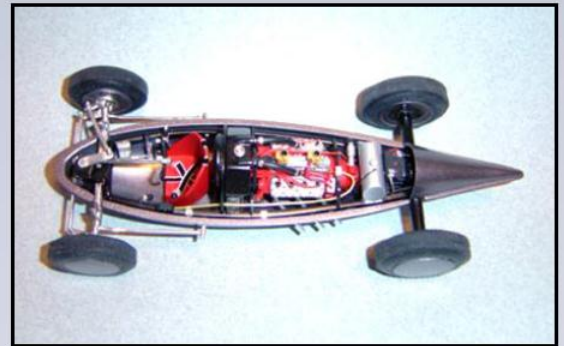


Kent used Testor's non-buffing aluminum to paint the upper hull. He was happy with the results and liked the durability of the paint.

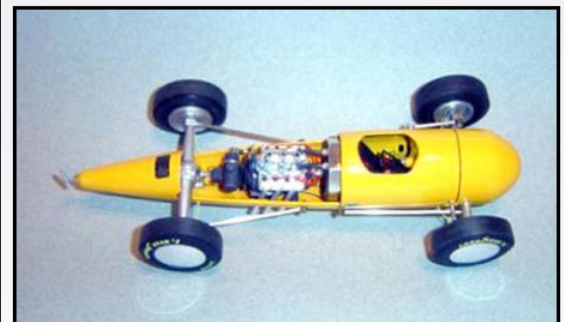
Kent McClure has been building models since 1961 and has been a member SVSM since 1980. Kent's interests include 1:43 scale race cars, small scale armor and aircraft, and of course anime based or TV/movie style science fiction. If it's weird looking, Kent would probably like it.



Steve's third belly tank model using the California Model Works kit. Steve modified the resin kit with the use of metal, plastic and rubber where possible due to the poor quality of the kit.



Note the definite tapered shape of the Estes model rocket nose cone as compared to the teardrop shape of a true belly tank.



This is the photo Steve found in an R.C. car magazine that was used as inspiration in building his first belly tanker.

Steve Travis started building models in 1958 and he joined SVSM around 1996. Steve's favorite subjects are cars of all kinds but mainly Hot Rods and Old Dragsters/Lakesters.

APRIL MINUTES

The April meeting had a bit of a light turn out. It was April 15 so perhaps many of you were fumbling with receipts in a last-ditch effort to get your taxes filed on time. Jason McChristian was a first time visitor to our club. Jason is just getting back into modeling after some time off and brought in a couple of kits to prove it. Nullifying Jason's possible membership in the club, Thom Ivancso announced he will be moving to Iowa. Rather than fly out once a month, Thom has decided to join a midwestern club. Too bad for us, but at least Thom will be able to buy a house as big as a movie theatre with the cash in his wallet. President Plummer announced an in-club contest for June. The title of the contest is "Immigrants." Now before you start on a 1:700 model of Ellis Island, the contest is actually about vehicles not in their native markings, i.e. U.S. Spitfires, Romanian Fw 190s, captured and repainted war equipment and even European built race cars with American product logos on them. If you have any questions about this, please see Greg Plummer.

In model talk... Steve Pringle brought in his 1:48 Dragon Ju 88. Steve is building his kit in U.S. markings (something he could enter in the June contest. See how easy that is?) as it was when it was flown to the United States after the war for evaluation. Ron Wergin displayed his 1:48 Tamiya Stug. III. Ron painted the tank with Tamiya paints and added an old Bandai tank commander. Ron also had on hand an Airfix 54mm multi-pose 8th Army figure painted with a mix of enamel and Acrylics that dates back to the 1970s. A few months late for the Fremont contest, Adriano Panetta brought his in progress Hasegawa 1:48 F-104G in a striking black checker scheme. Adriano used the Black Box cockpit and Aires burner can with Leading Edge decals. Next to the F-104 was Adriano's Tamiya P-51D. He used Tamiya Silver out of the can and a stunning set of Obscureco wheels and the True Details cockpit. Jim Lund brought a Mach 2 DC-4 kit in Pan American markings. Yes, an actual finished Mach 2 kit. Jim had next to the DC-4 a beautiful and heavily reworked Fokker F-VIIa/3m kit by Frog. This particular aircraft was named "General Machado"

and on October 28, 1927, was the first Pan American aircraft to make an international flight. Jim aspires to have a model of each Pan American aircraft. Barry Bauer brought in several 1:72 scale items. His Academy F4U-1A is close to being out of the box except that Barry drilled out the exhausts with a Dremel tool. It is painted in the U.S. Navy tricolor scheme. His other Corsair is a black F4U-5N made by Italeri. He has lengthened the fuselage and added a new engine. Barry's other kits include an in-progress Revell P-51 and an Emhar F-94C kit that we have seen before. Barry says the F-94C is almost

done and that we may see it completed sometime before the Universe dissolves into entropy. Steve Hinton's 1:25 AMT Challenger is being built mostly stock. Steve is busy polishing out the green finish and is going to paint the interior white. Steve is also working on a kit-bashed '25 Model T hot rod. It is finished in teal and white and features scallops and pin stripes. Buddy Joyce found a factory kit of a Corsair II that needs a few repairs. He also brought a gold colored 1950s era U.S. Navy crash helmet. Mike O'Riely brought his father's scratch-built 110-foot Island Class Coast Guard Cutter. This cutter, named "Long Island" was stationed in Monterey. Newcomer Jason McChristian brought a Tamiya 1:35 Kubelwagon and a 1:35 M4 Sherman on which he scratch-built the stowage rack and other items. Laramie Wright took some time off from building M4s but felt the need to build something containing the number four. Laramie is busy scratch building detail for the cockpit and landing



Paul Bishop won Model of the Month with his 1:200 Yamoto Battleship. Paul had made several additions to the original kit.

gear of his 1:72 Italeri F4U-4B. Laramie's Academy F4U-1A has had the cockpit floor cut open to more accurately represent the open floors of early Corsairs. Laramie is also building a 1:48 Hasegawa AU-1 as a sea blue Marine Corsair. Anita Travis displayed her Geometric vinyl Mummy model she brush painted with Apple Barrel paints. Ben Pada's F-86D has not changed much since we last saw it. Ben reports that the 1:48 Revell Dog Sabre is a really nice kit and that he is building out of the box. It is painted with Alclad II paints. Ben's checker-tailed 1:48 Tamiya P-51 is similarly finished with Alclad II and is decaled with Aeromaster decals. Steve Travis has decided

to do something a little different. He has finished three Robo Gear kits. The poseable models were painted with Citadel paints and Steve reports that they were a lot of fun to build. Jack Clark won the March Model of the Month for his gigantic 1:16 Tiger I. As if to compensate for last month, Jack brought a 1:72 Airfix Tiger I along with an Airfix RAF fire engine. He said both were fun to build. John Heck compensated for not actually building anything by spreading the parts of his Collect-Aire F9F-8T Cougar Navy trainer all over the table. John insisted the detail and casting on his pile of resin were some of the best he has ever seen from Collect-Aire. Mike Woolson presented his 1:72 Italeri GMC DUKW. Mike commented on the large number of small parts in the kit yet he managed to put it together in only about three hours. Show-off. Mark Schynert is working on a Kora conversion for the Tempest I prototype. The resin conversion is being applied to a Heller 1:72 Tempest 5 kit. Mark is also working on a resin Vickers Type 432. Bill Ferrante is in the midst of converting his 1:72 Revell Hurricane into an air racer. Bill says the kit has a nice fit and that the project is being held up while waiting for the decals to arrive from Japan. Bill's Star Trek USS Excalibur by Polar Lights has not had a lot done to it since last month's meeting but was nice enough to make the trip from the future anyhow. Thom Ivancso has recently finished his 1:72 IMC I-16 Type 24. The kit sports some photo-etch parts and home made decals. The antenna is made from EZ Line and while thin, can stretch a great distance, making it very difficult to break. Kent McClure had on hand a decent spread of Foundry Enterprises



Pirates with Bizarre Weapons figures, which were painted with Apple Barrel paints. Kent also brought his Revell 1:144 F-22 that he said was a good kit. His 1:72 Crusader Mk. III was made using the Vacucast conversion. Kent also brought his 1:72 Staghound armor car with many scratch built pieces. Gabriel Lee has painted and marked his PM 1:72 Ho229A as if it were flown by the Japanese in World War II. Gabriel kit bashed a fictional "F-20F" made from an X-29 and an F-5F creating

a two-seat plane with swept-forward wings. He also brought his 1:72 F-20A in Venezuelan marking for comparison. Cliff Kranz's silver 1:45 Monogram F-105 on a stick is in the works, as is his space Shuttle Columbia that now sports a coat of gloss white paint. Skulking in at the last minute and tossing several models on the table just to make us stay a little later was Mike Meek. Mike had his 1:24 Che-zoom curbside custom car resting on wheels from a Revell Porsche GTI and smothered in quite illegal Halfords Primer.

Mike said he was thinking about adding a wing to the back end. He will need it to outrun the EPA. Mike also brought a 1:48 Tamiya P-51 to be finished as Miss America and a Czech Model XP-77.

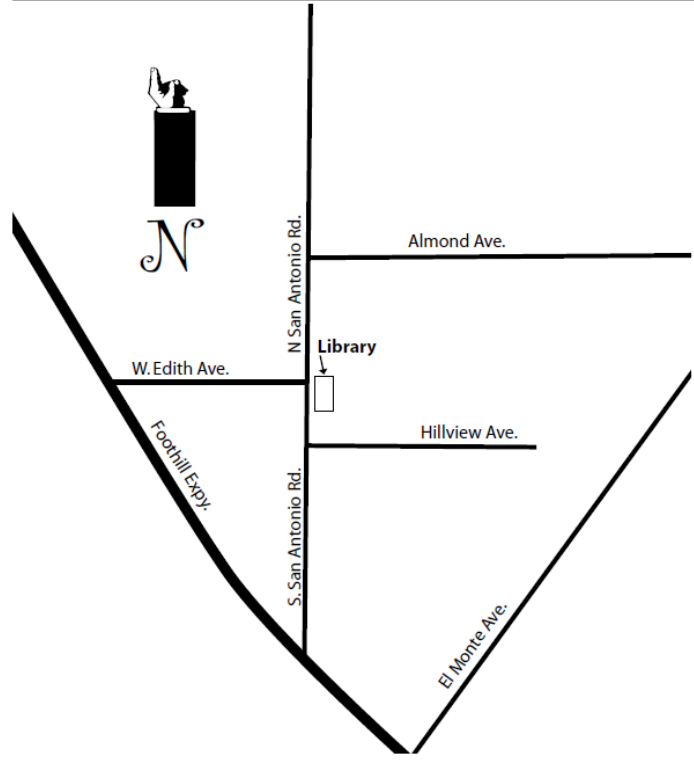
And the winner of the Model of the Month is... Paul Bishop, who threw out his back bringing his 1:200 Yamoto Battleship. Purchased back in 1973 for \$60, Paul had made several additions to the original kit, including lots of Gold Medal photo-etch, several cast pieces and figures. Large and impressive, Paul's Yamamoto on its base took up an entire table.

SUSM June Contest -

IMMIGRANTS

Vehicles not in their native markings -
U.S. Spitfires, Romanian Fw 190s, captured and repainted war equipment and even European built race cars with American product logos on them.

The SVSM May meeting will be held at the Los Altos Library



**Next meeting:
7:00 p.m.,
Friday,
May 20**
at the
Los Altos Library
13 S. San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022
For more information, call the
editor at (408) 307-0672
email: editor@svsm.org



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If your renewal date is in red, it's time to pay your dues!