

MODELS

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YOUNG MODELER

One enthusiastic young modeler is C.J. Blachford, 14, a student at Warner Middle School in Farmington Hills. "I bought a snap kit with my first allowance and have been hooked on it ever since," he said. At a recent meeting he displayed his detailed U.S. Navy F-14 Tomcat ("The same one being used in Iraq.") At a presentation to the club, C.J. told them it took a year and a half to complete the model, mostly because he had to battle a pesky housecat with a penchant for pouncing on the delicate plane. But C.J. was still able to take a first place at a contest at the IPMS Livonia-Warren contest in March. C.J. said he likes modeling because it's constructive and he enjoys playing with the mod-

els after he builds them. For adult members, building models is often a way to relieve stress.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Jerry Fraske of Livonia has been a member of the club for 25 years and building models for 40 years.

"I begged my parents about getting a model at a local Kresge store," he said. "Back then models were 50 cents each. They finally relented. I started building them, and I guess I never stopped."

Fraske is the personnel director at the Huron Valley Center Prison Psychiatric Hospital in Ypsilanti and building models is a nice contrast. "About 15 years ago, I built a replica of my Dodge Omni 024 and since I had the original I could duplicate everything from little marks on the engine to the interior, the whole bit, so that was kind of fun," he said. "I just like the idea of duplicating something as accurately as possible in

miniature." Attention to detail, down to "little marks on the engine," is what attracts many modelers to the hobby. Blevins said that 90 percent of the models are "kit built" but almost all are modified to make them more realistic, more like the original item.

Fraske was intrigued by the color scheme of a U.S. Navy P2V Neptune Patrol Bomber - a swirl of gray camouflage. The kit was for a standard version of the plane usually used for anti-submarine work, but Fraske wanted to reconfigure it exactly as it was used on four planes as a night interdiction aircraft in Vietnam. "They would fly over supply trails and so forth. They would fly strictly at night," he said. "There were only four of them and they were painted in that unusual gray color scheme and that's what fascinated me."

CAREER MAKER

For Stewart Bailey, a lifelong career began with a model. "I started back when I was in



Steve Freeman (from left), Chris Nichols and Dave Cunningham discuss a work in progress, a late war, model A German panther tank.

sixth grade," he said. "My Dad got me a model of Alan Shepard's Mercury Redstone Rocket. We sat down and built it at the kitchen table."

Bailey got turned on to spacecraft and today is the director of the Michigan Space and Science Center in Jackson. Originally from Redford

Township, where his parents still live, Bailey has been with the modeling club since its inception in 1976.

"This has always been good for me because of the mass pool of talent here," he said. "People are willing to share their secrets of how to make models and I've learned a lot

over the years."

Bailey began building every spacecraft model he could and then moved on to airplanes.

"I started reading more and more about airplanes and literally all my life has been about loving planes," he said. "I have a number of published aircraft articles and it all started with building model planes and wanting to learn the history behind them."

History was also behind his model of the U.S.S. Cairo, a 1:600th scale model (1 inch equals 50 feet) of a Civil War-era ironclad on display for the club. The detailed model shows the exact moment that the Cairo became the first ship in history sunk by a mine in December 1862.

To learn more about IPMS Livonia, check out their Web site at www.ipmslivonia.org which features a gallery of completed models.

During summer months, the club meets at a member's house. For information, call Bob Blevins at (734) 728-1134.

HUBRED

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Like ... stuff. Except for a few tools of the trade and life's basic necessities, I don't have much stuff. That's been a conscious choice. With every move, I've donated books, clothing and furniture, given away television sets and even my grandmother's dining room table and chairs, which my sister swears she's keeping for the rest of our natural lives.

Lots of stuff has ended up in the trash heap, but nothing that really mattered. Only a few items have survived more than 15 years - my baby book, wherein Mother recorded every embarrassing move from birth; to age 3; my high school yearbook, a real treasure if you're into disco-era memorabilia; family photos, of course; and two Mother's Day flower baskets the kids made when they were 5 and 7.

Those all make every place I've lived seem a little more familiar.

My parents taught me life's real treasures are stored in places we can't see. Which is not to say I don't appreciate a wonderful book or a beautiful piece of furniture. It's more what happens in the decision about what to lug up three flights of stairs and what to toss.

Interestingly enough, there's always been room and strength enough to include everything close to my heart.

That's the difference between my moving buddy and me - he has a MUCH bigger heart. To be fair, all of his stuff means as much to him as my little collection means to me.

It's just a lot heavier. Around about the second or third trip up and down a long flight of stairs, I stopped teasing him about the sheer volume of his belongings, because I'd noticed something. More to the point, I'd noticed *nothing*. No arguments. No raised voices. No broken furniture. And almost no tension.

"Moving is already hard," he said. "Why make it worse?"

That's the kind of friend for whom you wouldn't mind moving mountains, never mind a few dozen boxes. A few hundred books. Three computers. More clothes than ...

OK, you get the idea. The last truckload has been emptied, the last box unloaded. The shelves are lined (call me the Queen of Contact Paper), the furniture is almost arranged and our computers are set up, his in the spare bedroom and mine in front of a tall window with a lovely view. Soon, the things I treasure most will be there, too ... the pictures, the books, even those silly plastic flower baskets.

When the nights are clear, we sit out on the balcony and watch the traffic on Grand River until a chill in the air drives us inside. And it feels very good to be home.

Jon Hubred is editor of the Farmington Observer. She welcomes your comments in person or by mail at 3341 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335; by phone, (248) 477-5450; by fax, (248) 477-9722; or via e-mail, jhubred@ec.homecomm.net.

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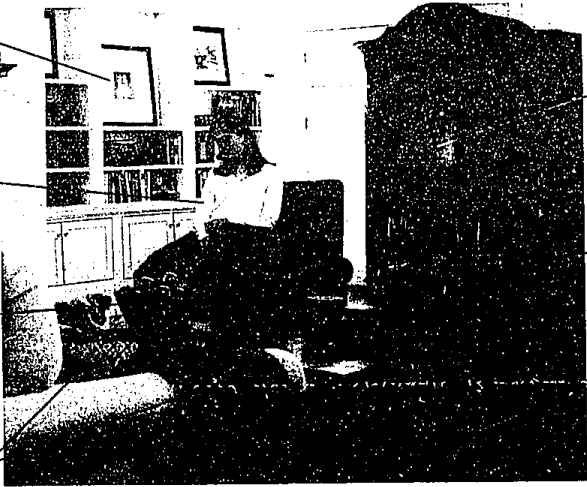
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