

# The Navigator

The Newsletter of Alamo Squadron

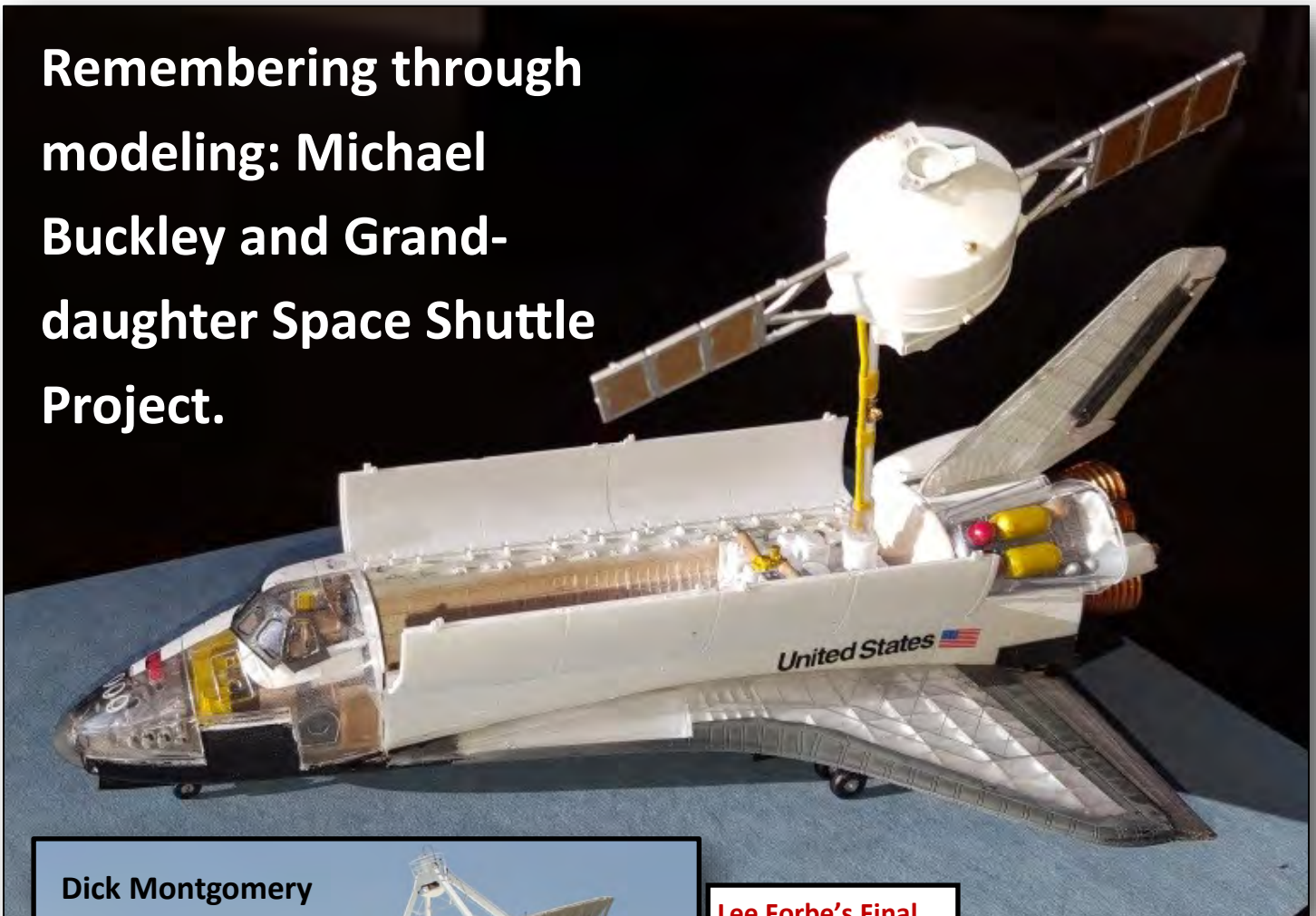
*The San Antonio chapter of the International Plastic Modelers' Society  
A registered 501c-7*

July 2017



IPMS/USA Chapter of the Year:  
1998-1999 & 2004-2005

## Remembering through modeling: Michael Buckley and Grand- daughter Space Shuttle Project.



Dick Montgomery  
Takes on a Trip  
Across the  
Southwest to the  
Region 10 Convention



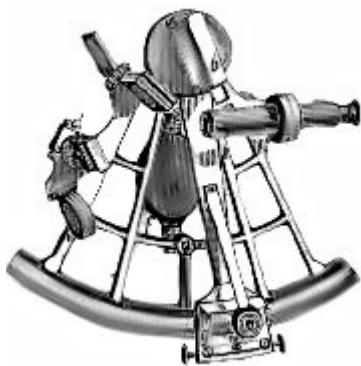
Lee Forbe's Final  
Installment on  
Paint Stripping  
with Brake Fluid

Rob Booth  
Packs for the  
Nats!



231 Days to  
ModelFiesta 37!





# President's Column

By Len Pilhofer

IPMS #49932



## President's Message – July 2017

Greetings Alamo Squadron and welcome to another issue of The Navigator. This month I thought I would take some time to talk about the most exciting time of the year for those of us in scale modeling...and that is the IPMS Nationals! This year, as most of you know, the "nats" are being hosted by the Fort Crook IPMS chapter in Omaha, NE. For those of you still interested you may check out the website here: <http://www.ipmsusa2017.com/>. You may pre-register at the site as well as number of other features such as Tours, Seminars, and T-shirt sales.

I encourage all members of Alamo Squadron, and especially those who are IPMS members, to consider attending this national convention. This is a great opportunity to see so many models from builders around the country, and even those from overseas, as well as see the latest products from some of the top manufacturers around the world. In addition, you will get a chance to meet other modelers from other clubs from around the country and help cement the strong presence of our own club at this great event. Lastly, if you are planning on attending, I encourage you to enter one, or more, of your builds into the contest. In my opinion, winning is not as important as participating and learning. You will learn so much about modeling when you see your work on the table compared to

others. For me personally, this is why I like participating in contests. Yes, it is nice to win, but what I enjoy more is seeing all those completed models on the tables. The comradery that this produces is much more important than walking home with a trophy (in my humble opinion!). This issue of the Navigator features an article that we published last year by Rob Booth where he runs down the essentials for packing ones builds for traveling to the nats...or any other show for that matter. Be sure to check it out!

One last thing I would like to leave you with: This year is also the time for elections in IPMS. If you are a member you should have received an e-mail with a link to an on-line ballot. I encourage you to follow that link, register for the election, and cast your ballot. While most of the officers are running unopposed it is important that we help IPMS maintain its strong presence in the world of scale modeling. This presence helps the club in influencing the various forces at work in our great hobby for the benefit of all IPMS members.

~Model On







# Club Announcements

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Welcome to another issue of Alamo Squadron's club newsletter The Navigator; the second edition published by your new editor. I don't know if you realize, but your newsletter is recognized for its quality by IPMS/USA. And to continue on the foundation built by you and your previous editor, Len Pilhofer, the club still needs your help. Submit! Submit! Submit! It is the content from club members (you) that makes The Navigator superior. You don't have to write a book or be the greatest modeler there ever was. Submit what you can, entire articles, perhaps pictures with a few notes of your latest build, or even your ideas. I can accept Word, Publisher, and text files; the only format requirement is that I can cut and paste to get it into the newsletter.

## **Bachelor Build Nights**

The focus of these gatherings is to build models as well as comradery with a secondary goal of watching, discussing, and learning different techniques. There will be no official club business at these meetings; only modelers sitting with their kit, building it, and talking about any topic you desire. Each build night will run from 5-9 PM.



All dates fall on a Thursday night. If you wish to host a BBN please let Len or Craig know and we can add to the dates listed here. Build night dates for the rest of 2017 are as follows:

13 July @ Craig's	27 July @ Len's
10 Aug @ Craig's	24 Aug @ Len's
14 Sep @ Craig's	28 Sep @ Len's
12 Oct @ Craig's	26 Oct @ Len's
9 Nov @ Craig's	30 Nov @ Len's
14 Dec @ Craig's	28 Dec @ Len's

## **Monthly Contest Schedule**

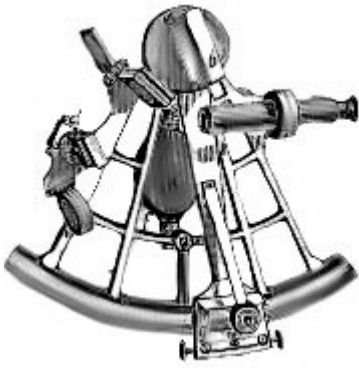
The internal club contest schedule for the rest of the Alamo Squadron year (up through the next elections) are as follows:

July 2017	Open
August 2017	Open
<b>September 2017</b>	<b>Things That Float</b>
October 2017	Open
<b>November 2017</b>	<b>That 70s Model</b>
December 2017	Christmas Party
<b>January 2018</b>	<b>Model of the Year</b>

## **Web Page Bios**

This is a way for members to learn a little bit of modeling-related information of their club mates in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and techniques in modeling genres and areas. In no way is this mandatory and only if you wish to share your info with other club members should you participate. Be aware that whatever we post on the webpage is public to the world...there are no security controls on our website. If you wish to have your bio published please reach out to Len at [president@alamosquadron.com](mailto:president@alamosquadron.com).

Here is a link to the bios already on the site: [alamosquadron.com/members.html](http://alamosquadron.com/members.html).



# Club Announcements

*During the June club meeting, special recognition was bestowed upon one of our club members. The following was read and a plaque was awarded.*

## Alamo Squadron Special Recognition Dick Montgomery - *A Leader at Every Level*

Alamo Squadron wishes to recognize Dick Montgomery for his many contributions to the club and the hobby of scale modeling. Dick's has been a *Leader at Every Level*: national, regional, local, and personal; bettering the hobby, the organization, and generations of modelers over his distinguished career.

### Leadership in the Hobby - Nationally and Regionally

Dick has exemplified leadership and service. He has served as President of IPMS/USA as well as holding other national offices including Secretary, Director of Local Chapters, and Director of the Reviewer Corps. He has also led IPMS Region Six as Regional Coordinator, being recognized as the IPMS Regional Coordinator of the Year (2003-2004).

### Leadership in Alamo Squadron

Dick has been a trailblazer for the hobby. He was one of the original founders of both the Alamo Squadron club in 1975 and the noted Model Fiesta contest in 1980. Most recently, Dick has served as president of the club from 2014-2017. Under his leadership, the club was certified as a 501C organization. He has championed Alamo Squadron's Advanced Builder Class, setting the example by being an instructor. In addition, Dick has worked to strengthen the club's monthly demonstrations and annual contest planning process.

### Excellence in Modeling

As an accomplished model builder, Dick has built subjects from a wide range of categories. He has competed at all levels, winning Premiere Awards at various IPMS National Conventions, medals at AMPS competitions, and numerous category awards over the years

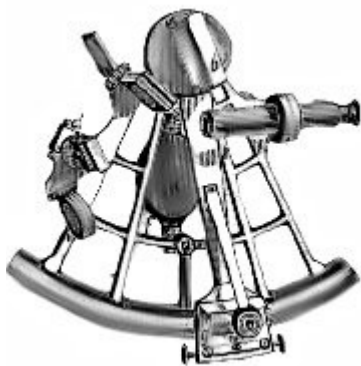
at IPMS modeling events in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas.

### Personal

Professionalism, Sportsmanship, and Encouragement have marked Dick's Leadership. He has always been willing to lend his time and talents to any modeling activity or the needs of an individual modeler and their families. Not only generous with his time, Dick has benevolently encouraged other modelers with kits and supplies.

For these reasons, Alamo Squadron wishes to recognize Dick Montgomery and thank him for his many contributions and for being a *Leader at Every Level*.





# Club Announcements

## June Club Contest Results

Second Place: Paul Blackburn  
'67 Camaro



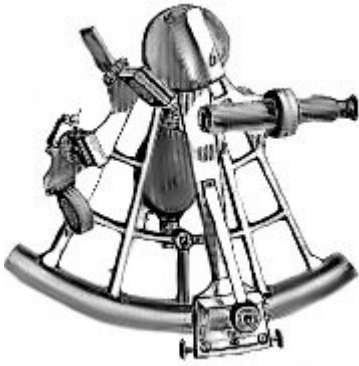
First Place: Dick Montgomery  
Mercury Redstone MR-3



Third Place: Craig Gregory  
Robot Suit







# Club Announcements

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## IPMS Elections

By Dick Montgomery

Former Director of Local Chapters, Membership Secretary, President,  
and Secretary of IPMS/USA, Regional Coordinator for Region 6

IPMS is conducting its bi-annual election for the national E-Board. Along with voting for officers, members are also being asked to consider the passage of a major revision to the IPMS Constitution.

Having served on the Constitution Review Board (consisting of Past-Presidents), and having served on the EB in the roles under the current Constitution, I have first-hand knowledge of the outdated and antiquated condition that characterizes the current Constitution.

Ron Bell has written a thorough revision of the Constitution and is putting that revision forward as an “amendment” (read replacement) of the Constitution. The CRB (Constitution Review Board) gave its unanimous support for this revision.

The current document was written “pre-internet”, and at a time when the Society was a much smaller organization, lacking in the financial resources it now possesses. Ron’s revision does a great job in cleaning the current mess. The document is way too specific when it comes to procedures that should be left to the judgement of those who are currently in office. Ron’s revision allows for the flexibility that changing times require.

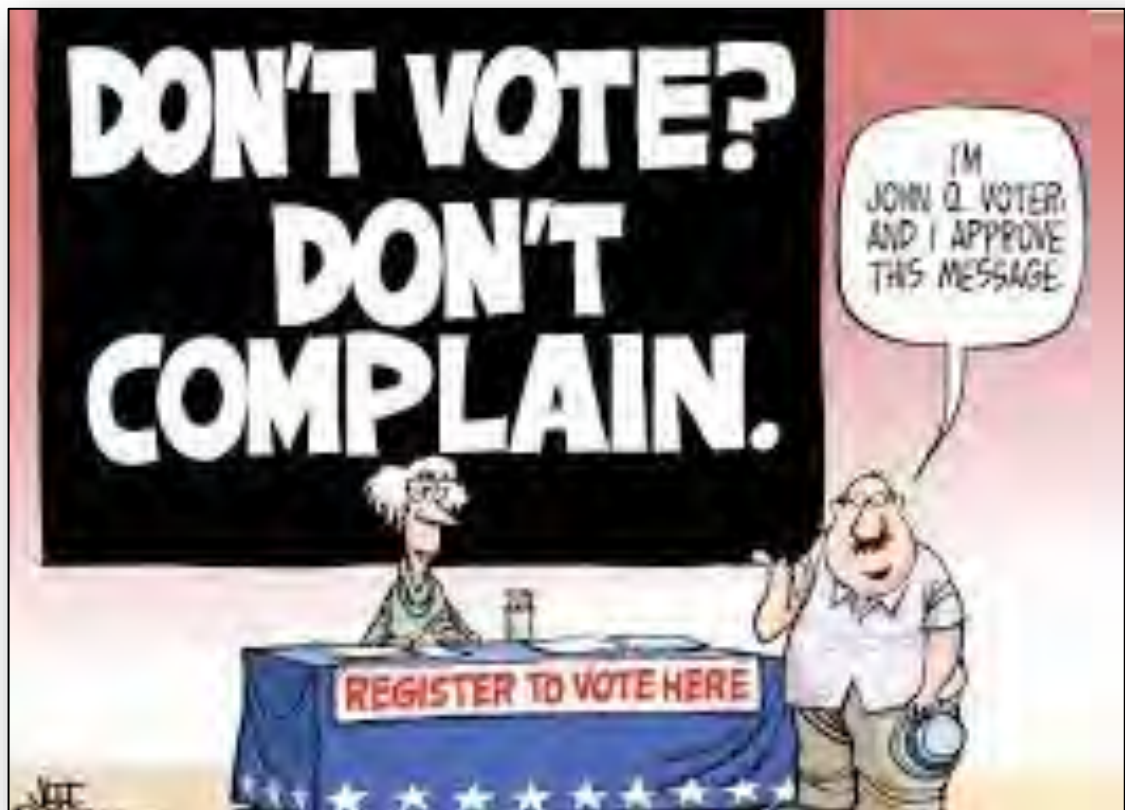
Several positions on the E-Board will be done away with since

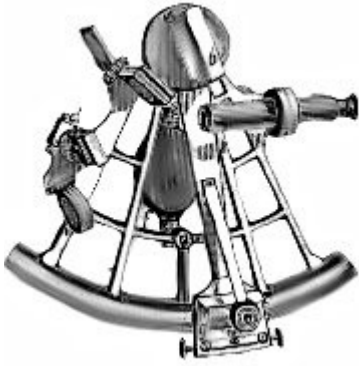
these offices no longer have any real function that requires and EB seat. A great deal of wording has been revised, updated, added, or simply thrown out. In the latest issue of the Journal you can compare the current Constitution with the Revision and judge for yourself.

I urge you to please cast a vote regarding the adoption of the revision. A certain percentage of the membership must cast a ballot for the result to be legitimate.

And, if I may, I would recommend that you vote in favor of the revision.

Please share my message with the IPMS members within your club and thank you for your attention to my request.





# Cover Story

## Gift to Scobee Elementary School

Story and photos by Michael Buckley

*Club member Micheal Buckley and his granddaughter built a model of the Challenger space shuttle and donated it to Scobee Elementary School where it remains on display in the library. Note that the school the school is named in honor of Francis Richard "Dick" Scobee. He was killed commanding the Space Shuttle Challenger, which suffered catastrophic booster failure during launch of the STS-51-L mission.*

*Introduction by Craig Gregory.*

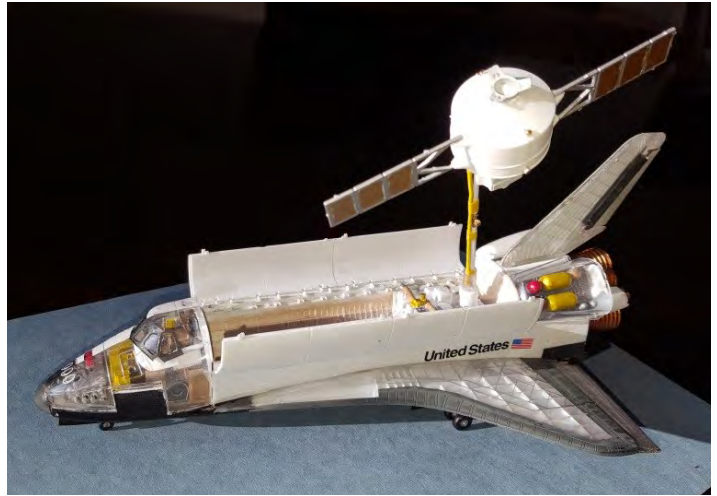
### **NASA Challenger Space Shuttle Scale Model**

Scale Model 1"=144" (! inch = 12 Feet)

Gift to Scobee Elementary School Library, San Antonio Texas

**Space Shuttle Model by Revell**

**Assembled and Airbrushed by Ms. Daphne Buckley, and her Grandfather Michael Buckley.**



The Shuttle is exposed to high temperatures from friction with the Earth's atmosphere during re-entry from orbit . In fact, the Spacecraft is flown Nose-high on re-entry , exposing as much of the underside belly to slow velocity

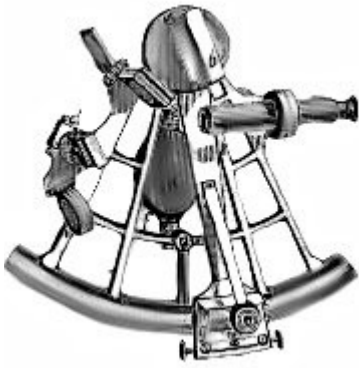


This model is semi-transparent---and shows an inside look at features along the left side ---while the right side is shown with the special enclosure of heat absorbing ceramic tiles ---some painted White, and others in high temperature zones such as wing leading edges and the entire underside, Black also denotes high stress/temperature areas on the tail.



The Model shows the Shuttle on the ground while practicing the launch of a solar-powered space satellite. Of course the doors to the Cargo Bay would be closed for re-entry as would the wheels retracted and their covers closed.

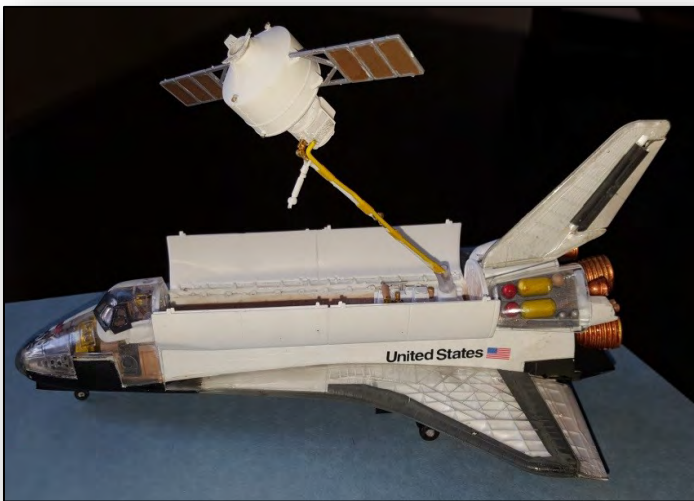




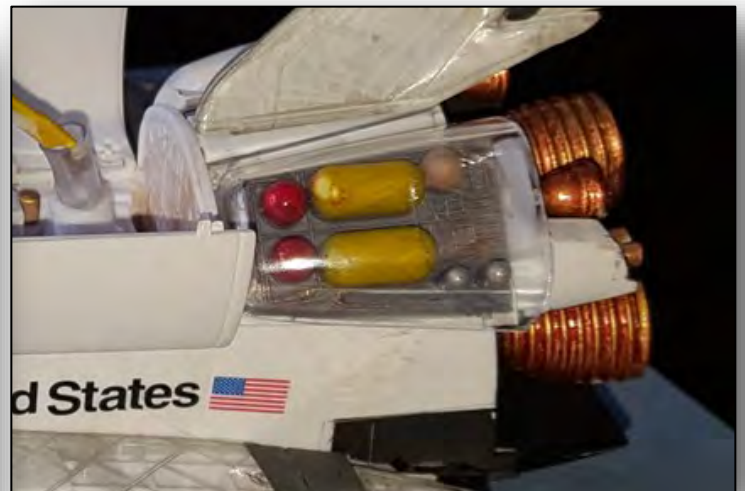
# Cover Story

## Gift to Scobee Elementary School

Note the large Main Thrust rocket engines to the rear and the small Nose Forward Reaction Thrust rocket engines -- seen better on the transparent left side



Also note the scale of the Commander's seat at the upper level of the transparent nose section. The Cockpit and Nose section was fully pressurized and featured Kitchen, Bathroom and Sleeping locations.



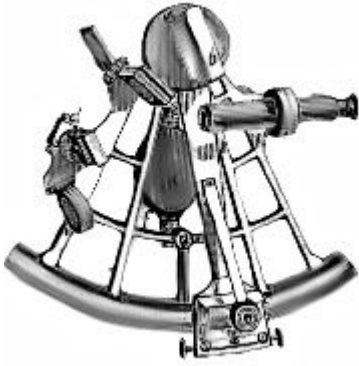
See also the small twin Directional Thrust rockets on the upper rear both sides—and the fuel containers as seen in the transparent blister on the left side.

### General Characteristics + Performance

<b>Crew:</b>	6-8
<b>Length:</b>	122 ft 2 in (37.24 m)
<b>Wingspan:</b>	78 ft 6 in (23.79 m)
<b>Height:</b>	58.58 ft (17.25 m)
<b>Empty weight:</b>	151,205 lb (68,585 kg)
<b>Useful load:</b>	55,250 lb (25,060 kg)
<b>Max. takeoff weight:</b>	240,000 lb (109,000 kg)
<b>Powerplant:</b>	3 × Rocketdyne Block 2-A SSME liquid-fueled rocket engines, 393,800 lbf each
<b>Maximum speed:</b>	17,321 mph (27,875 km/h)
<b>Service ceiling:</b>	100-520 nautical miles (190-960km)

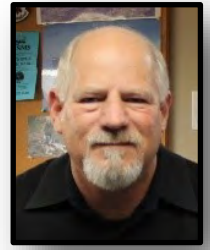


# Feature Story



## Chile Con IV Show Report

Story and photos by Rob Booth, IPMS# 37548



**Chile Con IV/IPMS Region 10 Convention  
Hosted by the Albuquerque Scale Modelers  
June 16-17, 2017  
Marriott Pyramid North, Albuquerque, NM**

Sometime ago ... I think it was either going or coming back from the Westlake, Louisiana show (SWAMP's CALMEX contest) in January, Dana Mathes made the suggestion that some of us team up to make the trip to Albuquerque, New Mexico to attend the "Chile Con IV" contest, as it was billed as a "regional" contest and convention. The distance involved (around 700 miles or so from SA), could be accomplished in a long day's drive. There are some interesting stops along the way out and back that could be incorporated, if you wanted to stretch it to a two-day drive. One thing led to another, and plans were made for myself, Dana Mathes and Dick Montgomery to make the trip. Somewhere in the planning, we all decided to have our wives accompany us, morphing the trip into mini-vacations for each of us.



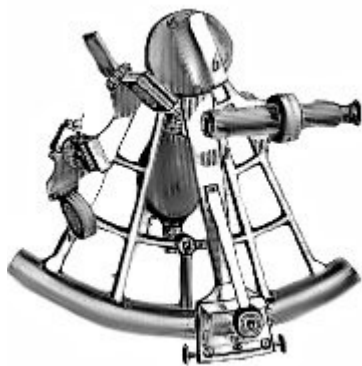
You "serious" modeling competitors are probably recoiling at the thought of your wife or significant other attending a contest with you, let alone making a trip to an out of state modeling event. In all candor, they probably would feel the same, if you asked them to tag along. Besides, how could you possibly make a dent in the vendor room, and haul all of your take back to

the house unnoticed? Well, sometimes it pays to include the wife in your travel plans if there is a "destination" involved that would appeal to them. Dick and Dana's articles elsewhere will explore those options.

Teresa and I arrived at the hotel Friday afternoon about 3:30, having driven straight through to Albuquerque following an early morning breakfast in San Angelo where we meet up with our daughter and her fiancé at their favorite diner. After we checked in and got settled in our room, I took my boxes of entries down to the contest room to register everything. I had pre-registered and pre-paid for the contest, which saved a little time on that process. However, the on-line contest entry forms that I completed ahead of time had to be taped to a second version of the same forms that had been pre-printed with a unique entry number. It seemed a bit redundant, but having been the Contest Czar for our ModelFiesta show for a few years, I understand someone else doing what is comfortable to them, even if it doesn't seem "right" to me. In any case, it works for them, as the awards presentation went off, complete with photos of the winners on the projector screen, with only a couple of minor name glitches.

After completing my registration and scattering my entries, we relaxed for a bit, and then met up with Dana and wife Liz to have dinner at "El Pinto", a highly regarded local cuisine eatery. We were rewarded with some excellent New Mexico style food including "America's best" nachos, and tender, delicious ribs. The ribs were coated with a New Mexico style red chili rub, and packed just "slightly more" than enough heat, even for a Tex-Mex aficionado such as myself! I will also admit to the freshly sliced jalapenos on the nachos packing more heat than I am used to. Or, perhaps I am just getting less heat tolerant from such things as I get older. Maybe that's why they say "It's Hell to get old"!

As Saturday morning rolled around, I made a visit to the Vendor Room to look for bargains. Jeff Garrity (Rare Plane Detective) made the trip from SoCal with



# Feature Story

## Chile Con IV Show Report

lots of stuff, and there were several area collectors selling off their stuff. Also attending was Tom Grossman of TAG Hobbies in Colorado, who is the US distributor of Iwata airbrushes. Tom knows his airbrushes. Additionally, Tom presented his excellent seminar on the proper cleaning of the instrument. I found several good deals on some aftermarket cockpits, photo-etch sets, etc., and picked up a copy of David McCullough's book about the building of the Panama Canal for \$3.00. No new plastic for me on this trip, though. Following my vendor room trip, I returned to the contest room to look around. I also pulled a couple of my entries from consideration after reviewing the rules flyer, as they had placed at last year's IPMS Convention in Columbia, SC, and were therefore ineligible for this competition. Note to self ... read contest rules BEFORE picking your entries!



Teresa and I went to "Old Town" Albuquerque later in the morning so she could engage in some retail therapy while it was still relatively cool. She found some clothing treasures she was looking for, which made the trip worthwhile for her, and we enjoyed an early lunch. About the time we finished lunch, I got a text message from Dick that my services were requested to assist with the judging, so we headed back to the hotel.

Judging commenced about 2:00PM with a small, but dedicated group of folks. I assisted Dick, who had



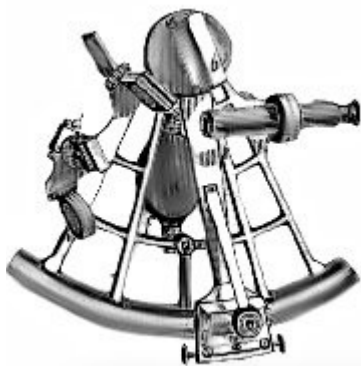
been assigned as the "team leader" for the Aircraft categories, along with Lynn Glenn, a local ABQ club member. We spent considerable time on the 32 and tiny scale categories, and judged the 72 and 48 scale categories that we weren't entered in.

A couple of other local guys picked up the categories that Lynn and I weren't competing in, and we finished up about 5:00. I headed back up to the room to clean up and get ready for the awards banquet.

At the banquet, show chairman Ken Liotta announced that there were 70 competitors, and some 400 plus entries in this year's Chile Con; down slightly from their last show. As for the contest results, the three of us from Alamo Squadron brought several entries each, and we were all rewarded with some winning hardware for making the trip. I've summarized our take at the end of the article. A memorable bit from the contest included the "Lopez Demente" award for the "most deplorable, tasteless entry", which went to a great little vignette titled "Storm Trooper Pooper-Scooper". The title should be self-explanatory, but I have included a photo below for your entertainment, along with some entries that caught my attention. Best in Show was awarded to an enclosed box German WWII submarine diorama entitled "Wolf's Lair". Also at the banquet, we ran into Don Cook, who now lives in Albuquerque. Don was a long time member of Alamo Squadron when he lived in San Antonio sev-

*(Continued on page 11)*





# Feature Story

## Chile Con IV Show Report



eral years ago. He sends his regards to those of you who would remember him.

All in all, a successful show, and congratulations and thanks to the guys from Albuquerque Scale Modelers for an enjoyable weekend.

### Alamo Squadron Member Results

#### Dick Montgomery

2<sup>nd</sup> – Figure Busts – Alien Bust

2<sup>nd</sup> – Motorcycle

#### Dana Mathes

3<sup>rd</sup> - <1945 allied vehicles - Cromwell

1<sup>st</sup> - 1946+ vehicles - M41A3

2<sup>nd</sup> - Armored Cars and Halftracks - LAV-150

1<sup>st</sup> - Artillery - SIG 33 Infantry Gun

2<sup>nd</sup> - 1/48 tracked vehicles - Panther G

1<sup>st</sup> - Conversions and Scratchbuilds - Hypothetical Self-Propelled Gun

3<sup>rd</sup> - Powered surface ships 1/400+ - USS Montauk

Best Out of the Box Military Vehicle - SIG 33 Infantry Gun

### Rob Booth

1<sup>st</sup> - 1/72 Single Engine Prop – US Markings – P-51D Red Tails

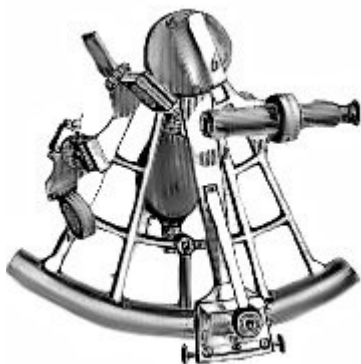
2<sup>nd</sup> - 1/72 Single Engine Prop – “Other” Markings – Hawker Typhoon Mk Ib

3<sup>rd</sup> - 1/72 Single Engine Jet – F2H-3 Banshee

2<sup>nd</sup> - 1/48 Single Engine Prop – Mig-3 (Early)

2<sup>nd</sup> - 1/48 Multi Engine Prop – Ju-88A-4 Trop.

2<sup>nd</sup> - Conversions & Scratchbuilds (ASAE) – 1/72 Me-210V-1 Prototype



# Club Member How To:

## Stripping Paint with Brake Fluid

Story by Lee Forbes

IPMS #2297



I'm sure if you're like me you have completed a model that when finished just didn't meet your personal standards for whatever reason and you retired it to the back of your display cabinet or put it somewhere out of sight. Sound familiar? Well there are ways of "starting over" and giving the model a new life by stripping the paint and decals off and rebuilding the model to your satisfaction. If you've checked the internet lately there are a number of ways to strip paint. And like other aspects of our hobby, some are downright hazardous to your health and require special handling. Some techniques suggest using bleach, 99% alcohol, spray-on oven cleaners, etc. My favorite is using generic brake fluid. I don't even recall where I learned about this technique, but it has always worked to my satisfaction, and is less hazardous to use than other available products. And unlike other methods it does not soften the plastic or damage the clear parts. I have several models in my collection that were completely rebuilt after stripping the paint and decals off of them using this method.

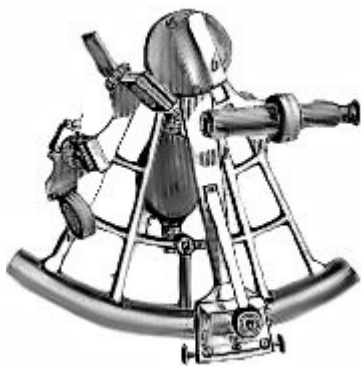
You will need several things to get started. Naturally you'll need at least a gallon of brake fluid, a plastic container and lid (approximately the size of the model you wish to strip the paint and decals off), used toothbrushes, Q-tips, and pointed wooden toothpicks to aid in the paint removal process, light weight rubber gloves to handle the model, and plenty of soap and water to clean and rinse the model when the paint is removed. While you can air dry the model, I use a hair dryer on medium heat to aid in the drying process. Also, you might want to use some lead fishing weights to keep the model submerged, because they might float with air trapped in the fuselage and inside the wings. I always let the brake fluid cover the model overnight before attempting to remove the paint. When the paint is removed I used a bathroom sink to wash and rinse the model. BTW, my wife didn't know I did this, so it's a good idea to "don't ask and don't tell" at this stage of the process!

### Recap of June Club Meeting Demonstration

I must confess, I was more than a little surprised that the nearly 30 year old paint on my old FROG 1/72 scale Fiat G-55 "Centauro" model came off so easy. As I mentioned at the start of my demo the model had actually been submerged and soaking in the brake fluid for almost 24 hour exactly. In fact when I started to remove the paint it was actually sliding off the model in postage stamp size sheets before I started to remove the paint with an old used toothbrush. And I don't







# Club Member How To:

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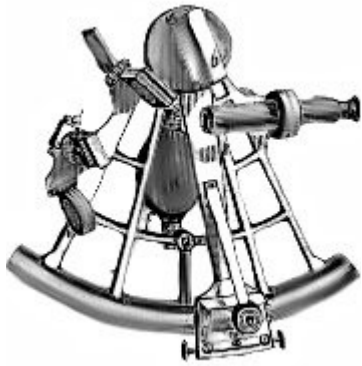
think I spent more than a minute or two to get the rest of the paint off the model. As was expected, there was some damage to the model itself (broken landing gear in transit and a propeller blade during the paint removal) all of which can be repaired, but no damage whatsoever to the plastic or clear parts.

Cleaning up the model in a soapy water bath was the hardest part and I had to do some additional cleanup the next day. But overall, the brake fluid did the trick and I'd highly recommend using it if you have a model you'd like to strip the paint off of in the future. Craig took a picture of the "After" for comparison with the photo in our June Newsletter. If anyone has any further questions, catch me at our July meeting. Sooner or later, I'll bring my re-build of this model to one of our meetings and you won't be able to recognize it.



**The original model (inset below) and the final result after soaking in brake fluid...a practically new model ready to be repainted!**





# Feature Story

## Packing For The Nats Story & Photos by Rob Booth IPMS # 37548



**I**t was that time of year again and the IPMS National Convention was upon us in August. I spent a couple hours planning the best way to transport my entries from my display case to the contest tables, with a minimum opportunity for any catastrophic damage to them. As an airplane guy, my packing method is tailored towards that genre, but most of my system is adaptable to other subjects. It's really just a contest specific adaptation of the same container that I use when I travel by car or truck to our regional contests.



First, I am still a working stiff, so limiting my available vacation time means I have to travel by commercial air service (UGH!) to the NATS convention city. As if airline travel these days isn't enough of a pain, try coming up with a packing system that you would entrust to airline baggage handlers to get your prized entries to another city across the country! In my opinion, that's just not an economic feasibility!

So, my first task was to come up with a light weight container that would fit within the overhead luggage bin of most of today's commercial airliners. That actually involves planning a flight itinerary on an airline that will use Boeing 737 or larger aircraft for all legs. The smaller commuter aircraft just don't have enough overhead room to allow for my system, and the

checked baggage system is NOT an option! I have obtained a couple of plastic storage bins over the years that come close to the 45 total inch carry on size limitations of most airlines. I use these same containers for local contests with a piece of scrap shag carpet in the bottom of it to keep my planes from moving around. The length actually exceeds the strict dimensioning by a couple of inches, but I've never been kicked off of a flight for it. Usually, if a flight attendant questions whether my container will fit in the overhead compartment, I just open the lid for closer inspection by whomever, and the "wow" factor takes over. Then, you get "Captain, you HAVE to see this!", and blah, blah, blah. But I digress ...

I bought a couple sheets of inexpensive Styrofoam sheet wall insulation a few years ago (less than \$15 for a 4'X8'X3/4" sheet) to experiment with for just this purpose. My plan was to come up with a system that would allow me to maximize the number of models I could place in the space available, and then "lock and fix" the position of each model in place to prevent any movement in any direction. I traced out



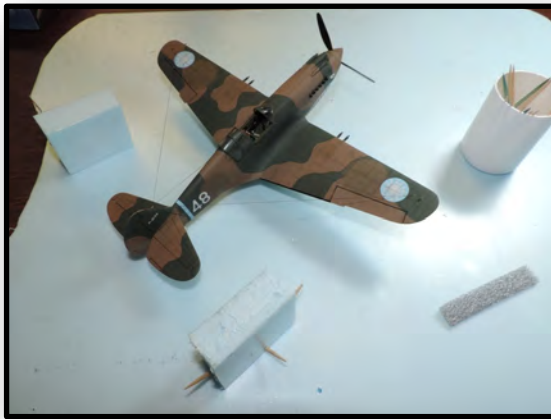




# Feature Story

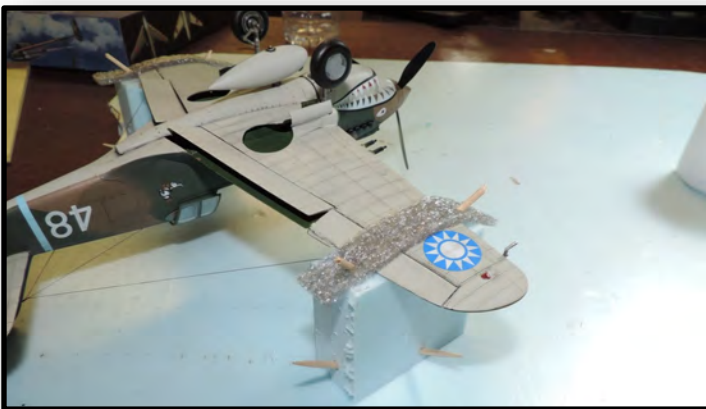
## Packing For The Nats

the inside dimension and pattern for each of my bins, and cut out a Styrofoam “base” that would fit in the bottom of each .



Starting with my usual carpet base, I then experiment with the placement of each

model to maximize the space available to fit the number of entries I’m dealing with. My typical haul would include 6-10 subjects in 1/72 and 1/48 scale. When I’m satisfied with a layout that accommodates all my models without touching each other to avoid scratches and scrapes, I take a digital photo for reference, and go to work with the Styrofoam.



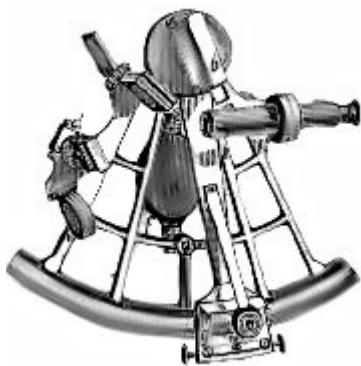
I begin by cutting a couple of identical pieces of foam the will support the wings of each aircraft in an inverted position. The pieces of foam must allow the aircraft to clear any antenna or open canopies from the foam base, but not so tall that it puts the landing gear too close to the bin lid, as the lid will

“give” from above. After cutting the appropriate blocks, I begin placing each model to match the layout I came up with, one at a time. I attach the Styrofoam blocks to the base with toothpicks pushed through the blocks and into the base sheet at an angle to fix them in place . Each aircraft is then placed, inverted, on the top of the blocks on their wings, and affixed with thin foam “straps” held in



place by more toothpicks. This system effectively “locks” each model in its respective space, and prevents any shifting or movement with the exception of an all out drop kick or free-fall of the container. A couple of foam “columns” here and there, prevent the possibility of a jolt or bounce causing the entire sheet to raise up and collide with the plastic lid, damaging fragile landing gear, ordnance, etc.

This system has served me well, travelling to four or five National Contests without any major catastrophes to my entries. In fact, I have inflicted way more damage removing models from my display case or placing them on contest tables, than I have suffered as a result of “travel” damage.



# Feature Story

## Journey To The Region 10 Convention

Story & Photos by Dick Montgomery

IPMS #14003



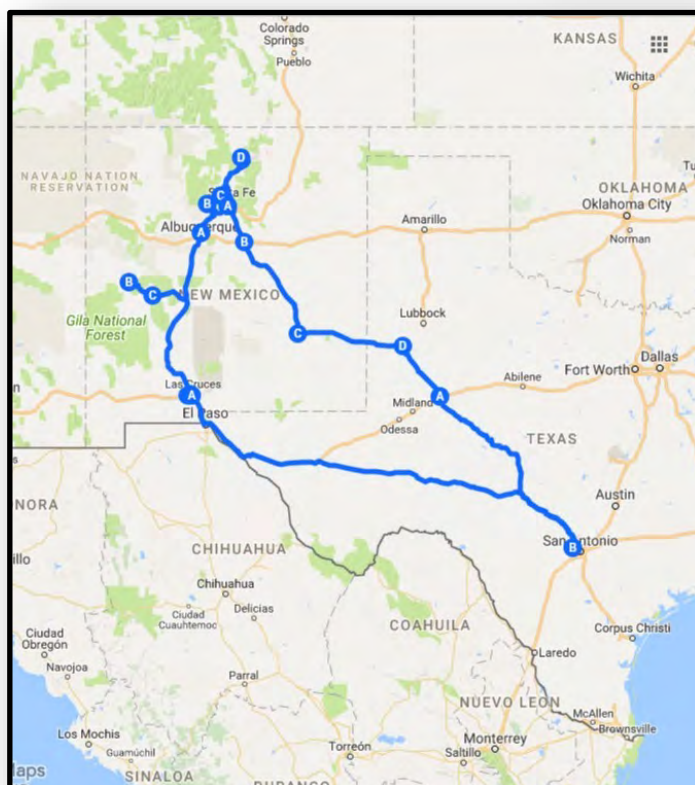
Wife and I usually make “model contest road trips” into something far different than just “going to a contest”. Our recent road trip to the Region 10 Convention, held in Albuquerque, was no different. Travelling in a straight-shot the round trip clocks in at 1418 miles, and from San Antonio, it is a 10 ½ hour drive. But a straight-shot trip means that there are some historic and scenic sites that will be missed. So we decided to go the “long way around” and to enjoy the scenery and history, both before and after participating in the Convention. We departed San Antonio on Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup> and returned on Tuesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>.

### Day 1: (Thursday, June 15)

Having been to and through New Mexico a number of times, we planned to hit sites we had yet to see and our first stop was in Las Cruces. The drive from San Antonio to Las Cruces, via El Paso is an entertaining one. The landscape changes from the humid, coastal plain here in San Antonio and, for the first few hours, one is driving through the scenic Texas Hill Country. The temperature drops as one leaves San Antonio and begins the gentle climb into the hills on I-10. Boerne, Comfort, Kerrville, and Junction seems to fly by fairly quickly, and scenery is always remarkable.

Farther west on I-10 one notices the trees getting fewer and farther between, and finally giving way to low scrub and rather flat ground. Sonora, Ozona, and Ft. Stockton come and go, and then one notices real, honest-to-goodness mountains to the south and west. By the time one arrives in Van Horn the highway has mountains on either side. Now, they aren't the Rockies, but they are very different from what we see in San Antonio and points south.

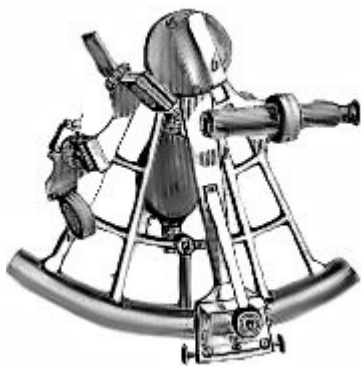
By the time one gets to Ft. Hancock ( can you name the movie in which Ft. Hancock was mentioned?) one can see Mexico to the west and south of I-10. It's a “big empty” out there and that is part of its charm. You can make “good time” since the speed limit has been a posted “80 MPH” for some time now.



As one gets closer to El Paso, a certain song has been playing in one's head, about a cowboy falling in love with a beautiful Mexican girl in Rosa's Cantina. Can you name that song and the artist who sang it? As you travel through El Paso you'll notice the Franklin Mountains to the east. You'll also notice the temperature has definitely gone up from the temps back near Kerrville, and the land is clearly “arid”.

Crossing the state line and pushing north one arrives in Las Cruces. L.C. was the destination point for our first day. With the time change, we gained an hour and took advantage to go see the “Roadrunner”. The “Roadrunner” is a large sculpture that is located on the west-bound side of I-10 just a few miles outside of Las Cruces. After taking pictures of the “Roadrunner”, one can find the World's Largest Red Chile Pepper. Again, more pics. And then because it is still sunny, and the sun is shining on the Organ Mountains to the east of Las Cruces, we simply pointed the vehicle in





# Feature Story

## Journey To The Region 10 Convention

their direction, drove through the town and found a location from which we had a good view of the mountains. Just on the other side of those mountains is the famous “White Sands” area. We had visited White Sands on a previous trip so we did not revisit that spectacular area.

Our travels on this first day totaled about 625 miles and took about 10 hours, not including our site-seeing in Las Cruces.

### Day 2: (Friday, June 16)

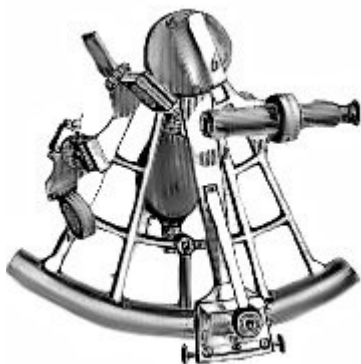
After a pleasant night’s sleep, we were on the road again, northbound on I-25. We kept seeing signs, indicating mileage to a town named “TorC”. Of course, that refers to Truth or Consequences, a name that is too long to fit on the highway signs. I wondered how many travelers, not familiar with New Mexico, were

wondering why their Garmin did not list a city named, “TorC”.

A little farther north, we found ourselves in San Antonio. The New Mexico version of San Antonio is vastly different from the Texas version. Stopping at the Owl Café, while Wifie was ordering a Chile Burger, I engaged one of the locals in a brief conversation. It seems San Antonio has about 500 residents, including the ranchers who come into town for supplies. It also has a connection to Conrad Hilton. If I heard the story right, he established his first hotel in San Antonio. Leaving San Antonio, we continued northward to Socorro, and turned west on Highway 60. We were in an area with lots of trees and very straight roads. After about 25 miles we found the trees had disappeared and we began to cross an unusually flat area. The road went in a straight line across this flat expanse making it a simple task to make note of the hills in front us,

which turned out to be about 23 miles away. As it turns out, the flat area was once a very large lake. The only objects that broke the isolation and emptiness were 23 very large “dishes” that were easy to spot. These dishes make up the Jansky Very Large Array, which is a site made famous in the movie, “Contact”. We continued past the VLA another 40 miles to Pie Town, New Mexico. There are just a few “eateries” in town and one of them serves nothing but pie. And yes, it was worth the drive! Turning around, we headed back to visit the VLA. There is a





# Feature Story

## Journey To The Region 10 Convention

very nice Visitor's Center and one can take a short walk to get up close and personal with one of the dishes. As it happens, we were standing in the shade of the dish (*always* stand in the shade of anything when in this part of the country) when the motors fired up and it began to re-orient itself. Having watched "Contact", I knew that the other dishes were also re-orienting, and it was a very interesting experience to see them spin and adjust their vertical angle in perfect unison.



The whole process took about a minute and then, without fanfare, the movement stopped.

We loaded up and returned to Sorocco and then headed north to Albuquerque and the hotel which served as the convention site. During Day 2 we drove 479 miles in 8 and a half hours. We also crossed the Continental

Divide while heading toward Pie Town. The elevation at that point where we crossed the Continental Divide was 7,796 feet, an elevation about 7,000 above that of San Antonio (that's the San Antonio in Texas).

### Day 3 (Saturday, June 17)

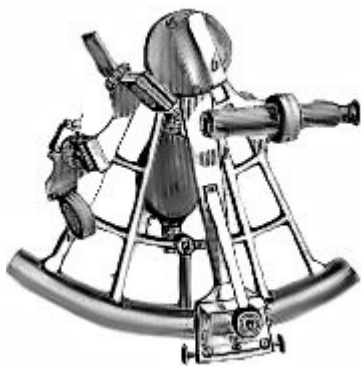
Saturday was spent at the contest site. I volunteered to assist and was given the opportunity to work at the registration table and also serve as the Team Leader for the Aircraft Judges. Rob Booth will cover the Convention and Contest in his part of this article.

### Day 4 (Sunday, June 18)

With the convention over, it was time to head north. This day was shaping up to be a long day due to the number of attractions we wished to visit, although not a lot of mileage would bring us to our final destination for the day.

Heading north on I-25 we left Albuquerque behind us, and after about 30 minutes we exited I-25 to Cochiti, a small town near a very large earthen dam on the Rio Grande River. Taking Indian Service Route 92 west of Cochiti, we travelled a short distance to Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument. This stop turned out to be the high-point of the trip. Erosion has formed some deep canyons separating the hills, and some rock pillars have taken on the shape of trees. Some are quite short but others stand 50 to 60 feet high. We chose to hike the less vigorous Cave Loop Trail that measured about 1.2 miles with an elevation change of around 100 to 150 feet. There was a steeper trail that one could follow to the top of one of the plateaus with an elevation change of just under 700 feet. We were quite satisfied with the easier trail. There is a considerable amount of wildlife if one is quiet and still, and takes the time to look for it. Birds and lizards are quite easy spot. The "cave" for which the loop trail is named, is not a real cave, but an eroded opening in the base of one of the hills. Being a former spelunker, I noticed that the cave was inhabited by bats as I could see the guano stains on the walls and ceiling. After returning to the parking area after our short hike, we drove further into the park area to a site named,





# Feature Story

## Journey To The Region 10 Convention

Veteran's Memorial Overlook. The road to this overlook at the top of a high plateau is gravel and features some very nice views as it switches back and forth, going up the slope.

All in all, it was an extremely enjoyable morning, if not rather warm and dry, so a bottle of water in your backpack is a requirement.

Retracing much of our path back to I-25 from Cochiti, we again turned north, catching Highway 285 that took us through Sante Fe to a dot on the map named Pojoaque. Turning west on Highway 502 we found ourselves driving through the arid hills and landscape, a road which was quite dependent upon the terrain for its direction and elevation. Just shy of Los Alamos (yes, *that Los Alamos*), one searches for the sign to White Rock, NM on Highway 4. Once in White Rock, we looked for the rather nondescript signs leading us to White Rock Overlook. One would never expect such a magnificent, high, and view of the valley and a great deal of the surrounding terrain! Not two hundred yards away, in the city park, were some boys getting ready to play baseball, and here we were, watching two waterfalls cascade down a sheer drop off not too far from the centerfield fence! After time for some pictures, enjoying the sound of the water falls, and the breeze that threatened to carry one's head gear away, it was back to the truck and north toward Espanola.

Our next goal was to reach the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge, the 7<sup>th</sup> "highest" bridge in the U.S. (as determined by the vertical distance between the roadway on the bridge and the river).

This was going to be a very interesting drive. The Visitor's Center is several miles from the bridge, itself, and the attendant provided us with directions to the bridge via a steep, gravel switch-road which took us from "river-level" to the top of the plateau, some 656 feet above the river. The gravel road is "unimproved", with signs or guardrails. They figure that if you are driving that road then you don't need the usual warning signs and safety gear that one finds on Interstate or State Highways. The grade approaches about 6 to 7% and could be quite tricky if one's vehicle does not have decent ground clearance. During our ascent we saw only three other vehicles, two were

pickup trucks and one was a rather scrappy mini-van with high ground clearance. All were going uphill, as going down that path would be rather "situational", what with the need to keep one's brakes cooled off and to maintain the required traction to steer properly. Once on top of the plateau it was a short drive to the paved State Highway that crosses the bridge.

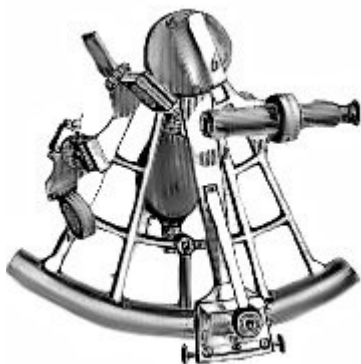
There are parking areas on both the east and west ends of the bridge and it is an easy walk to cross the bridge on foot. The sidewalks are of average width, with guard rails that are about 4 feet high, but there are no other impediments to interfere with the fantastic view from the bridge. Leaving the bridge behind, we drove into Taos, found a place to eat, and, not having the desire to visit any of the local sites, we headed south to Santa Fe.

We racked up 284 miles with a driving time of just over 6 hours. We spent about 4 hours hiking or sight-seeing, so it did prove to be a long day.

### Day 5 (Monday, June 19)

It was now time to turn south and begin the drive back to San Antonio. (Again...the Texas San Antonio, and not the New Mexico version) Since we have been to New Mexico numerous times, being rather familiar with the Sante Fe to Texas route, it was going to be a driving day with stops limited to food, rest, or the occasional photo-op. Our goal was to get to Big Spring for the night. Our route would take us through Roswell, then east to Brownfield, Tx, and then to Big Spring. Lunchtime found us in Roswell and as we left the city we did take the time to shoot a picture of the "Welcome to Roswell" sign.

Some of the stretches of highway were what one could call "magnificent desolation". The horizon (again, measuring with the odometer) was 20 miles off, the road was a straight line, and there was not a building, house, barn, or any man-made item (except the fencing along the road) within site. That's a "big empty" folks! Once in Texas we passed hundreds of pump-jacks, some operating and some not, hundreds of wind-turbines, and we dodged many a farm vehicle that



# Feature Story

## Journey To The Region 10 Convention

shared the road with the cars and trucks. Pulling into Big Spring we ate dinner at TJ's steak-house....ya gotta try it if you're in Big Spring!

We added 410 miles and 6 hours, 23 minutes of driving time.

### Day 6 (June 20)

From Big Spring to San Antonio is familiar ground, having driven it a number of times. The speed limits in Texas are conducive to covering long distances rather quickly, and the scenery, although familiar, is still very pleasant.

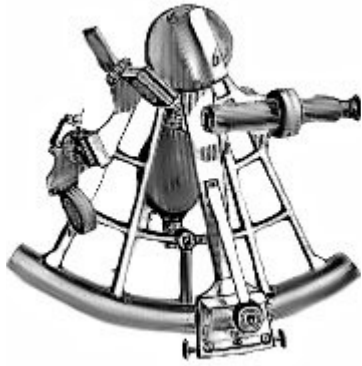
As the day went along we passed through Sterling City, San Angelo, Eden, Menard, and joined up with I-10 at Junction. Try Cooper's BBQ in Junction....Yum!

As we had planned, we avoided the morning traffic on I-10 as it entered San Antonio, and were well ahead of the rush-hour traffic on I-10 and Loop 1604, arriving home in the early afternoon.

We saw some new attractions which were spectacular. Our two favorites were the VLA and the Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument. The Rio Grande Gorge bridge was interesting and the view into the gorge was spectacular, but the drive up the gravel road was even more fun than the bridge, itself. Our convention time in Albuquerque was enjoyable and participation in their event is well worth the drive. We found Taos to be a bit disappointing but then we didn't really have anything there that caught our eye while planning the trip. The trip registered in at 2,106 miles over a six-day span.







# Upcoming Events

IPMS Region 6

***Next Meeting: Thursday, July 6th, 2017 at 7:00PM***

***Location: Northside Ford of San Antonio***

**August 12, 2017**

**HAMS Eleventh Annual Model Car Show & Contest**

**Cypress Creek Christian Community Center**

**6823 Cypresswood Drive**

**Spring, TX 77379**

**[www.ipms-hams.org/annual-contest/](http://www.ipms-hams.org/annual-contest/)**



**September 9, 2017**

**Fort Worth Scale Modelers' Annual Show & Contest**

**Bob Duncan Community Center**

**2800 S. Center St.**

**Arlington, TX 76014**

**[www.fortworthscalemodelers.org/supercon.html](http://www.fortworthscalemodelers.org/supercon.html)**



**September 16, 2017**

**AMPS CENTEX Armor Expo 2017**

**Georgetown Community Center**

**445 E. Morrow St.**

**Georgetown, TX 78626**



**October 14, 2017**

**The 2017 Capital Classic**

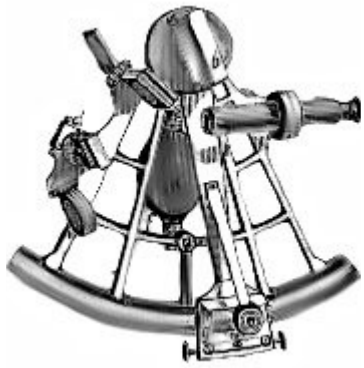
**Travis County Expo Center**

**7311 Decker Ln.**

**Austin, TX 78724**

**[www.austinsms.org/contest.php](http://www.austinsms.org/contest.php)**





# Upcoming Events

## HobbyTown USA®

A large, detailed image of a Gundam model kit, specifically a Zeta Gundam, shown in a disassembled state. The main body is in the center, with various armor plates, joints, and weapons parts scattered around it. A red sticker with the word 'SPEED' and a checkmark is placed over the chest area.

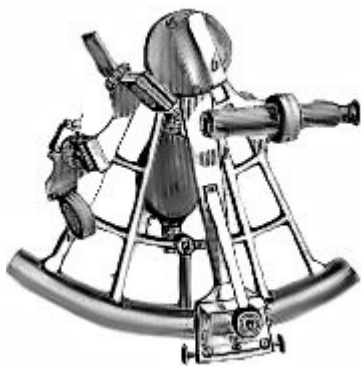
### **GUNDAM BUILD CONTEST!**

### **JULY 29, 2017**

**Building: 12-3pm**  
**Judging: 3pm**  
**Entry Fee: Cost of Kit\***  
**Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> thru 3<sup>rd</sup> Place**

\*Identical kits are provided; competitors will simply pay for the kit at cost to join in. They will have 3 hours to do whatever work they want to the kit; at the end of the competition, all entries will be judged according to skill and creativity, with the top 3 winning prizes.





# About Alamo Squadron

## Executive Board 2017-2018



**President:**  
**Len Pilhofer**  
IPMS #49932  
president@alamosquadron.com



**Vice-President**  
**Herb Scranton III**  
vp@alamosquadron.com



**Treasurer:**  
Dana Mathes  
IPMS #43781  
sec-treas@alamosquadron.com

**IPMS/USA Alamo Squadron** was founded on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1977 in San Antonio, Texas, for the enjoyment of building scale models and the camaraderie of the members. It is a hobby-centered social organization which, at its core, is focused on scale modeling of all kinds. It is an excellent source of information for those who wish to enhance their modeling skills and improve their modeling techniques, and is open and inviting to visitors and guests. Dues are \$24.00 a year, due to the treasurer on September 1st of each year.

Alamo Squadron has been hosting ModelFiesta since 1981. Locations have included the Wonderland Mall, a Holiday Inn, the Seven Oaks Motel & Convention Center, the Live Oak Civic Center and the new location for 2013, the San Antonio Event Center.



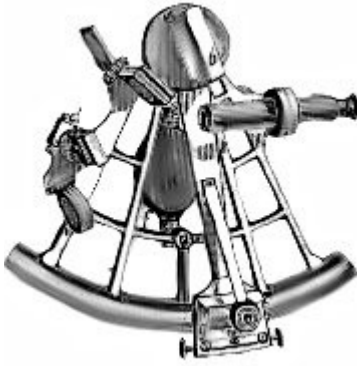
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# Final Words ...



<http://www.ipmsusa.org/>

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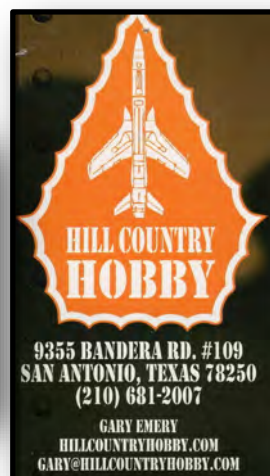
Alamo Squadron's newsletter, "The Navigator", is published monthly by IPMS/USA Alamo Squadron of San Antonio, for the enjoyment of the members of Alamo Squadron and its friends around the world. Articles, reviews, news items, and other hobby-related contributions are very welcome. Send text file, photos, and web sites as well as feedback to our editor, Craig Gregory: [craig.jonathan.gregory@gmail.com](mailto:craig.jonathan.gregory@gmail.com)

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