

Capital Area Modellers Society – Members Profile The Anderson Family

The Anderson Family, Darren his wife LaVonna and children Samantha and Mack are something you don't see much in the modelling hobby, a family that models together.

The Andersons live in the booming metropolis of Geary, New Brunswick not too far from the Capital of Fredericton. They bought the house in which Darren grew up and are in the process of turning it into their castle one room at a time. According to Darren it's an endless process but it's fun and they live in a good community with good neighbors.

Darren was born in 1969, arguably the greatest year for classic muscle cars, and was a little freaked out when he turned forty. But after putting in 3 years, he has a message for those approaching that milestone, "C'mon in boys, the water is fine".

Their youngest Mack is on the verge of 12. As for the ladies of the family, well ladies don't share their age, but Samantha says she is an intermediate.

The family has started a reputation for building first class models with Darren winning "Best Automotive" in 2012, Samantha won Best Junior in 2011, Best Intermediate in 2012 and Mack won Best Junior in 2012 as well as best Junior in the 2013 New Years Challenge.

I had a chance to sit down and have a chat with this interesting family about modelling and other stuff and it was definitely enlightening and entertaining.

Other than build models what do you do to support your hobby?

Darren: I am a website developer and graphic designer for a small, local company. I've actually been in IT and design for over 18 years. I started way back when they actually published a book listing ALL the websites on the internet. I suddenly feel old.

LaVonna: I'm the Administrative Assistant for the Geary Baptist Church.

When did you join CAMS?

Darren: I attended my first CAMS meeting shortly after the May 2011 show, so it's only been a few years.

LaVonna: Does attending the year-end BBQ's count as joining?

Mack: So attending a meeting means you've joined? Well... I guess I joined on January 8th of this year – at the New Year's Build Challenge.

Samantha: I guess I just enter the May Shows. Those are fun!!

What type of models do you like to build the most?

Samantha: I like Classic Cars!

Mack: Pick-up trucks and Camaros. OH! And the classic cars with the pointy front end and grill.

Darren: I built primarily late 60s early 70s muscle cars and the occasional race-built car. But I have a few modern muscle car kits begging to be opened.

LaVonna: Well, seeing as I've only ever built one model... I guess I'm leaning towards Corvettes... Classics!

When did you start modelling?

Darren: I built quite a few car models when I was in my early teens but then got out of the hobby until one day in 2009. While cleaning out a closet, the kids and I found an old, semi-completed Volkswagen Bug convertible model kit and decided to finish it. Right after completing that kit, as a team, Samantha and Mack each wanted to try a kit of their own – so off the local hobby shop we went! (We've) been modelling pretty steadily ever since.

What was the first kit you remember building?

Mack: The first model I built was a 1/24 scale Plymouth Prowler with matching trailer, painted 'Deja Blue'.

Samantha: I did a Cadillac Escalade and it was painted 'Electric Pink'.

LaVonna: Mine was a 1975 Corvette Convertible in 'Mystic Maroon'.

Darren: My first kit was probably a '57 Chevy, brush-painted navy blue right from the Testor's square bottle. I'm sure I used a tube and a half of glue!

What is your latest build?

Samantha: My last build was a 1969 Chevelle SS, painted in Hugger Orange. I'm about to start a Tamiya Volkswagen New Beetle.

Darren: My last completed build was a Revell 1970 Challenger T/A finished in Plum Crazy lacquer and I'm currently working on a Meyers Manx dune buggy box-stock build. A Lindberg Dodge Charger SRT8 Super Bee is impatiently waiting in the wings.

Mack: 1/35 scale Toyota pick-up with a ZPU-1 machine gun and figure. It was painted in Tamiya white primer and Model Master clear coat. I'm working on a 1969 Ford Galaxie in Emerald Green. This will be my first time working with Gold bare-metal foil and custom wheels.

LaVonna: 1975 Corvette Convertible. Up next for me is a 1/16 scale 1978 Silver Anniversary Edition Corvette (Whoo hoo!!) (Um... my latest build is also my 'first' build. LOL)

What was your favorite build?

LaVonna: Well, to risk sounding like a broken record... my fav build (thus far) is my 1975 Corvette Convertible.

Mack: My favourite is my GMC Sonoma Pick-up Truck. It's a 1995. It's the first model where I did some serious detailing and built it exactly like the box art.

Samantha: My Chevy Nova Pro Street. I think it's a 1966. I really like the colors I used for it - "Lime Ice" paint with a white interior. The colors really popped!

Darren: My favourite, so far, is my 50's Austin Gasser. It was my first time building a race car, using bare-metal foil, using flocking for carpeting and adding some weathering details. It's just a really great kit to build and to detail.

What is your Holy Grail of models?

Darren: You know what, I really don't have one. I like taking a \$25 kit and working carefully on it to bring out the best it has to offer. I like to add a few after-market parts and details to create a finished model that doesn't break the bank, but that gets attention at shows or in the display cabinet at home.

What part of a build do you like most?

Mack: The final assembly, when you're putting all of the parts together to finish the model.

Samantha: I like reaching the mid-point when you can start to see how it's going to turn out. I like doing bare-metal foil too, as well as the fine detail painting.

LaVonna: For me, the best part of a build is just being together in the 'Nerdery' (Darren's office) with our models out and the kids are giving me instructions on how to NOT glue my fingers together.

Darren: I like that part too - the togetherness! But as far as the building process goes, I'm the weird one of the bunch - I actually enjoy painting. I like laying down nice smooth coats of base color, adding clear and then polishing it out 'til it shines. So far, painting has been done with rattle cans, but I do have a complete air brush set-up... I just don't have the courage to actually start using it. Soon, I hope.

What part of a build do you like least?

Samantha: The planning - working out what parts to paint what colour. It's agonizing!!!

Mack: For me it's painting the parts and then when you've realized you've painted the wrong side and you need to paint it all again. Scraping paint or chrome off the glue points is tedious. OH! and sink marks! I completely forgot about those!

Darren: Flash. I hate flash and cleaning up mold separation lines and ejector pin marks. Maybe we should move up to \$35 kits?!

LaVonna: I'm with Sam... the planning is a big job and I rely heavily on the more experienced builders to help me out.

What is your greatest achievement in modelling?

Mack: Winning the Junior Division at the 2012 CAMS show.

Samantha: Kicking boy butts at the CAMS shows! Hehe! Actually, I'm pretty proud of winning the Intermediate Division at the 2012 CAMS show.

LaVonna: I'm following Gordon's (Barrett) example and "not gluing my fingers together"... but there's always next year!

Darren: The greatest achievement has been finding a hobby we can all do as a family. It's great when we all gather in the "Nerdery" (as my wife so affectionately calls my office) and pick up where we left off last time, and build and talk together. Topics range from the technical side of building to what happened during our day at school or at work. It's time spent together, interacting. It has been a really great thing for us, as a family.

What model would you like to see reissued?

Darren: Ahhh... When I was about Mack's age, my Dad had an early-to-mid-seventies (I wish I could remember the exact year) Maverick Grabber, with a straight-six motor. It was yellow, with the black "Grabber" stipe package and black interior. I would love to see the Jo-Han Ford Maverick kit reissued. I would build that kit in multiples!

If you could have one new kit issued what would it be?

Samantha: The Bricklin!! I've been into this car since I completed a school project in grade 6.

What inspired you to start building and continue building?

Darren: Starting to build models gave the kids and me something fun to do together, especially over the fall and winter months. The drive to keep building is fueled by wanting to improve our model building skills. There are always new building techniques to learn and to try. We try to add something new to our model builds each time.

Samantha: Yeah, like bare-metal foil, flocking, polishing and waxing...

Mack: ...photo-etched parts, engine wiring and plumbing - which I'm planning to do on the Galaxie I'm working on.

LaVonna: For me, I started building so that I'd understand what Darren and the kids were talking about. It's also a great exercise for the kids to instruct and direct ME as I complete my own model. They really like knowing more than Mom (about modelling, that is!). I may not have a long career as a builder but my appreciation for the effort put into completing a build is sure to grow.

What can be done to make the CAMS or the Website better?

Darren: It would be great if more kids and more families started the hobby. I'm sure CAMS will continue to help do just that. After all, the wonderful experience we had meeting new and friendly people at our very first CAMS show is what brought us back the next year, and has inspired us to continue building and improving.

Just thinking out-loud here... Perhaps CAMS could look at working with local middle and high schools, or other youth groups and organizations, to offer instructed model building sessions. I think they call them "activity periods" at school now. There's got to be ways to introduce this hobby to the next (video-game) generation.

Your comments...

Thanks to all the CAMS members for your willingness to share your building experience and advice, and especially for warmly welcoming our family into the group.

I'd like to thank the Anderson Family for their cooperation. It was a definite pleasure talking to them about a hobby that they do as a family unit, something that is unusual today in the digital age.

What is next on the modelling horizon for this family, well they are in the process of building a spray booth, a photo booth and Santa brought them an airbrush for Christmas. If what we have seen of their past builds is any indication the sky is the limit for sure.

It is a pleasure seeing a family together and "Sharing the Hobby"

The Scribe