

Plastic Models Are Glue Of Local Group

By STEPHEN LLEWELLYN
Staff Writer

The airfield is lined with a wide variety of aircraft ranging from sleek Desert Storm fighter jets to four-engine bombers that flew during the Second World War to First World War bi-planes.

No, this is not Frederickton's next international airshow.

It is a 1/72nd scale diorama which will be the centre-piece of the Capital Area Model Society's 5th annual spring model contest at the Brookside Mall on May 1.

The "airfield" will be the showcase for the aircraft entries in the show. It will be located next to a 1/24th scale parking lot that will be packed with every imaginable kind of shiny car model.

It is all part of the continuing interest in a hobby that almost everyone remembers from their childhood when they first unwrapped that plastic model kit under the Christmas tree.

Started Small

Bill Daisley, president of the Capital Area Model Society and one of the people who helped build the airfield and the parking lot, said in a recent interview that the club originally involved a group of adults who decided to get together to pursue their hobby and hold private competitions.

In the last few years, it has grown to 30 active and inactive members who want to show off their work to the public.

"The contest has been growing," he said. "Last year we probably had around 100 entries."

This year the society is making a special effort to attract young people to the contest whose parents are not modellers. Mr. Daisley said they have a separate junior category for modellers under the age of 13.

There is no entry fee for the competition and registration starts at 10 a.m. Public viewing and judging will be done between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. and prizes will be displayed after 6 p.m.

Different Divisions

The eight categories are: junior, armor, ships, autos, dioramas, fantasy/science-fiction, aircraft and figures. There are ribbons for first, second and third place as well as a prize for best in show, best 1/72 scale aircraft and the best 1/24th scale Ford or Mercury auto model.

To some, building models is childish, but those within the hobby know it can become almost a work of art. Dr. Daisley said it all depends on the level of detail in which a modeller is interested.

"That's the way it is with most members of the club," said Mr. Daisley. "It starts out as a really neat toy to play with but it becomes much more than that."

For many years the plastic kits in the toy shops and department stores

were manufactured in the United States and those companies had limited interest in details, he explained. But that changed with new competition.

Japanese Imports

"When the Japanese got seriously interested in the industry, they began flooding the market with extraordinary kits," said Mr. Daisley.

Then after-market specialty companies began to get involved. Those companies produce special, extremely finely-machined parts made out of white metal to add to a model.

For example, the bulky, unrealistic plastic railing on the deck of Mr. Daisley's new model of a Soviet aircraft carrier will be replaced with metal parts the width of a human hair.

"This is where it gets into the realm of museum quality," said Mr. Daisley.

It is also where it gets into the realm of major expense. Super detailing a \$30 plastic model can increase the cost to as much as \$400 and take up to two months to build, he said.

Attracted To Detail

Mr. Daisley said it is the extremely fine detail that attracts him to the hobby.

"If you could see my workshop now there are way too many kits with the detailing done but not assembled," he said.

But to make sure the fun doesn't go

out of their hobby, the CAMS members occasionally have a contest to see who can build the best model just from the original kit, he added.

"To consciously not do that (add extra detail) with the kit you spent money on is extremely hard," he said.

The hobby does not have to be expensive.

"There are a whole range of ways for a beginner to get in," said Mr. Daisley. "It depends entirely on how much (they) want to spend."

European companies tend to package their kits with the necessary paint and glue while other kits can be snapped together without glue or paint. American companies rate the complexity of their kits from one to three on the box, he explained.

Amazing Variety

There is also an amazing variety of models available. There are cars, trucks, boats ranging from ancient galleys to modern ocean liners, knights in armor, alien space monsters, space shuttles, Star Trek space ships and every imaginable kind of modern or historic military vehicle.

"If you see something that strikes your fancy you can probably get a kit if it," said the society's president.

Mr. Daisley interest is aircraft. "With me it's a plane buff thing," he said. "I live to see aircraft of all kinds." About half the society's members



CARS AND PLANES — The Capital Area Model Society is organizing its fifth annual spring model contest to be held at the Brookside Mall on May 1. The contest will include a scale airfield and parking lot to display as many as 100 entries. From left are society president Bill Daisley and society members Bob Russell, Stu Maksymuk and Larry Hubbard. (Stephen MacGillivray Photo)

are in the military and they are drawn to tank models and other military equipment, he said.

Some of the club's military members actually use their models in training, he said.

Another member of the club who is a civilian pilot specializes in aircraft models that takes four or five years to build.

"He does level of detail I can only dream of," said Mr. Daisley.

Broaden Horizons

Others seem to choose models outside their area of job expertise, he said.

One helicopter pilot builds only tanks and a tank platoon commander at CFB Gagetown makes only planes, said Mr. Daisley.

If on the rare occasion a company does not manufacture a kit of something someone wants to build, then the challenge becomes to build the model by intermixing parts from other models, he explained.

That is called "kit bashing," he added.

Some modellers even build things without kits which is called "scratch building," he said.

A person does not have to be a master builder to join the CAMS.

"We welcome beginners," said Mr. Daisley.