

Seattle Chapter News



Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA
March 2012

PREZNOTES



The Big Push

Each year for the past two decades and more, IPMS Seattle has put on the Pacific Northwest's largest model contest: our Spring Show. Thanks to the financial success of this show, we have been able among other things to keep our annual membership fees at the incredible deal of \$15. We also put on one heck of a show, an all day event with superb models on display in the contest, top class vendors, a make and take for the kids, even seminars. Again, a super deal: \$5 for walk-ins, \$10 for those wishing to enter the contest, with unlimited entries for the same low price.

The Club functions very well all year long, thanks to a few dedicated souls: your E-Board makes sure that there is a warm, well lit meeting room for us to come to each second Saturday in the month, where we enjoy chatting to friends, seeing the latest models on the show and tell tables, looking over the vendors' wares, and now we have introduced seminars at the conclusion of each meeting for those interested in listening in. Editor Robert Allen brings us a very interesting newsletter each and every month.

However, when it comes to the Spring Show, the whole club needs to pitch in for a "Big Push". The Show Committee sets the ground work with months of hard work, but it takes a great effort from all of us to make the Show the success it is. In particular, we need members to help out with providing donations to the Raffle. This is one of THE highlights at our show, and a very important profit center for our efforts. And it is brought to show participants courtesy of the generous donations of you, the chapter's members. Please consider donating a couple or more nice kits to this year's effort at the March meeting. We also need feet on the ground: volunteers to help show contest entrants where their entries go on the tables, people

to man the raffle table, and especially help with judging. We plan on offering a seminar at the March meeting to go over what judges look for during their judging rounds on Show Day. The show is seven hours in length: I urge you to consider spending one or two hours volunteering to help make this year's event another resounding success. See you at the March meeting.

Andrew

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IPMS Seattle Web Site (Webmasters, Norm Filer & Tracy White): <http://www.ipms-seattle.org>

Public Disclaimers, Information, and Appeals for Help

This is the official publication of the Seattle Chapter, IPMS-USA. As such, it serves as the voice for our Chapter, and depends largely upon the generous contributions of our members for articles, comments, club news, and anything else involving plastic scale modeling and associated subjects. Our meetings are generally held on the second Saturday of each month, (see below for actual meeting dates), at the **North Bellevue Community/Senior Center, 4063-148th Ave NE**, in Bellevue. See the back page for a map. Our meetings begin at 10:00 AM, except as noted, and usually last for two to three hours. Our meetings are very informal, and are open to any interested modeler, regardless of interests. Modelers are encouraged to bring their models to the meetings. Subscriptions to the newsletter are included with the Chapter dues. Dues are \$25 a year for regular mail delivery of the newsletter, and \$15 for e-mail delivery, and may be paid to Spencer Tom, our Treasurer. (See address above). We also highly recommend our members join and support IPMS-USA, the national organization. See below for form. Any of the members listed above will gladly assist you with further information about the Chapter or Society.

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers, and do not constitute the official position of the Chapter or IPMS-USA. You are encouraged to submit any material for this newsletter to the editor. He will gladly work with you and see that your material is put into print and included in the newsletter, no matter your level of writing experience or computer expertise. The newsletter is currently being edited using a PC, and PageMaker 6.5. Any Word, WordPerfect, or text document for the PC would be suitable for publication. Articles can also be submitted via e-mail, to the editor's address above. Deadline for submission of articles is generally twelve days prior to the next meeting - earlier would be appreciated! Please call me at 425-823-4658 if you have any questions.

If you use or reprint the material contained in the newsletter, we would appreciate attribution both to the author and the source document. Our newsletter is prepared with one thing in mind; this is information for our members, and all fellow modelers, and is prepared and printed in the newsletter in order to expand the skills and knowledge of those fellow modelers.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

The IPMS Seattle 2012 meeting schedule is as follows. All meetings are from **10 AM to 1 PM**, except as indicated. To avoid conflicts with other groups using our meeting facility, we must **NOT** be in the building before our scheduled start times, and **MUST** be finished and have the room restored to its proper layout by our scheduled finish time. We suggest that you keep this information in a readily accessible place.

March 10
April 14

April 7 (Spring Show at Renton)
May 12

IPMS/USA NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

IPMS No.: _____ Name: _____
(leave blank) (FIRST) (M) (LAST)

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Signature (required by PO): _____

Adult: \$25 Junior (17 years old or younger): \$12

Family (Adult dues + \$5, one set magazines, # of membership cards required: _____)

If recommended by an IPMS member, list his/her name and member number _____ (name) (IPMS#)

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Spring Show 2012 – March Update

by Jon Fincher

Howdy all! Here's your March update on our Spring Show. Overall, everything is moving ahead strongly and smoothly:

- All the seminars are scheduled and presenters are working on content now.
- All our trophies and ribbons are currently ordered.
- We have all vendor tables sold, and have started a waiting list.
- We have the Renton Community Center from 2 pm until 5 pm on Friday afternoon, so setup will occur at the normal time.

There are even some new things for this year:

- Tables for model display will be conference height.
 - o Conference height tables stand 42 inches tall, higher than normal, which should help ease the back strain of our judges.
- Our food vendor will be adding new foods.
 - o As a full service catering firm, they will offer more soups, as well as lasagna and salad for lunch.

They're small changes, but they should have a big impact on Show Day.

In February, Andrew and I travelled to Portland to meet the OHMS club. They were very happy to see us, and we had a chance to not only talk up the show, but to participate in their yearly auction. They have a great club in Portland, and we're looking forward to having them come up, put some quality models on our table, increase our judging ranks, and hand out their Best Submarine special award.

As good as everything is right now, there are two areas of concern for me:

Raffle: I and Eric thank you for your generous donations to the raffle pile, but

even with that extra effort, we're still looking for more to add to the pile. Remember, models aren't the only things we raffle off – artwork, books, decals, resin kits, and paint sets all make great raffle items.

Volunteers: At the risk of sounding like a broken record, the success of our club and our show can be directly linked to the generous volunteer effort of our members. We are always extremely grateful to everyone who volunteers to help at the Spring Show, but are always nervous that this will be the year we don't have enough people to pull it off. Therefore, I urge you to find the area where you feel most fulfilled, and commit an hour or so of your time on show day. The following areas are looking for volunteers – please contact the given area lead for more info:

- Registration
 - o Needs: 6-8 people for the morning
 - o Contact: The lovely Morgan
- Girling
- Room monitors for Seminars
 - o Needs: 2-3 people
 - o Contact: The perspicacious John Newcombe
- Hosts
 - o Needs: 4-5 people for the morning
 - o Contact: The extremely vertical Robert Allen
- Judging
 - o Needs: Many and varied for the afternoon
 - o Contact: The tenacious Mike Millette and John Chilenski
- Setup and Teardown
 - o Needs: As many as we can get for Friday and Saturday afternoon
 - o Contact: The thesaurus owning Jon Fincher

Thanks for your time, your donations, and your confidence – we're well on our way to pulling off another successful show, and I look forward to reporting that success in May.

Other NW 2012 Shows

3/16/2012 - 3/18/2012

The 42nd Annual Bob Paeth Portland Classic Model Car Contest - IPMS/Scale Auto Builders Ass'n (SABA)
Portland (OR) Expo Center
2060 N Marine Dr, Portland
David Fletcher 503-314-2063

3/31/2012

22nd Annual Pacific NW Model Car Fest - IPMS/Scale Auto Builders Ass'n
Holiday Inn - Portland (OR) Airport
8439 NE Columbia Blvd, portland
David Fletcher 503-314-2063

5/6/2012

Model Car Sunday 23 - IPMS/Puget Sound Auto Modelers Association
Puyallup Elks
314 27th St NE, Puyallup
Chellie M. Lynn 206-938-2389

6/9/2012

Peninsula Model Show and Contest 2012 - IPMS/North Olympic Peninsula Modelers Society
Fort Worden State Park, building 204
Port Townsend
Larry Speelman 360-681-5266

9/15/2012

OHMS & Evergreen Aviation Museum Model Show and Contest 2012 - Oregon Historical Modelers Society
Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum
500 NE Michael King Smith Way,
McMinnville, OR
Brian Yee 503-309-6137

10/6/2012

18th Annual "Show Off The Good Stuff" Model Show & Contest - Palouse Area Modelers
Moscow Moose Lodge
210 N Main St., Moscow, ID
Scott Rowland 208-843-5137

10/6/2012

IPMS Vancouver 42nd Fall Show
Bonsor Recreation Complex
6550 Bonsor Avenue,
Burnaby, BC, Canada
Peter Hickey 604-988-3253

2012 NorthWest Scale Modelers Display

by Stephen Tontoni

NorthWest Scale Modelers is a loose confederation of modeling enthusiasts that is privileged to hold its monthly meetings at the Museum of Flight in Seattle. In exchange, NWSM assembles museum-quality themed model displays which are rotated every three months. In addition to that, NWSM coordinates with the Museum of Flight to stage its annual February model display.

The NWSM show model display at the Museum of Flight has an illustrious 20 year history. From its very humble beginnings, the number of models on the tables has usually hovered around 2,000 in recent years. As a display, rather than a competition, it's always been open to any models built at any time. It's the opportunity to see

some models that have now been retired from the show circuit, and that's a treat.

This year, the challenge for NWSM was to have 2,500 models on the tables; that's heady stuff, and the display organizers knew it would take many modelers from NWSM, IPMS Seattle, IPMS Vancouver, other modeling organizations, as well as non-affiliated modelers to make it happen. John Newcome and Tim Nelson of NWSM were the ringleaders for the most part, urging any and all participation in the display. NWSM even collected donations from the group to cover van rental for a couple of the modelers to bring their entire collections. One of whom, Bill Osborn, brought over 400 by himself!

There were a number of additional draws for modelers to participate. One was free admission to the museum for anyone displaying a model, as well as a generous discount to the gift store there. The gift store is more than just gifts; it also has

many books and other aviation items and resources. The second was to encourage modelers to develop their skills in seminars which offered: automotive finishing, model photography, armor weathering, and modeling tools/techniques. All of these were well attended in the Murdock Theater next to the Great Gallery where the display was. The Murdock Theater is a state of the art multi-media auditorium; it has comfortable theater seating, good lighting, and camera with projector. The projection arrangement solved the old problem with seminars, that is, participants' ability to clearly see very fine work being done by the presenter. The third attraction was the number of working tables in the Great Gallery where modelers could work on their current projects while museum patrons observed and had their questions answered.

Kids had big draws as well. There were Make-n-Take events both Saturday and Sunday sponsored by two hobby shops in



the Seattle area, Skyway Model Shop and Galaxy Hobby. They were very popular, with both kids and parents excited for them to build free snap kits there and bring them home. With this exposure and encouragement from their parents, those kids are more likely to be the next generation of modelers. Another attraction was a full-size radio control replica of the Star Wars R2D2 robot whirring around, chirping and whistling, to the delight of all kids there. Bob Jacobson, the builder and operator of the robot even programmed music in the robot, playing the cantina music from the movie and the Darth Vader March.

This event was very well attended by the public and modelers. In the end, there were 3,030 models present, brought by over 80 modelers! It shattered all records for model displays and competitions in the Pacific Northwest, and possibly far beyond. Museum attendance that weekend also achieved record numbers. While there have been 2,500 or so through the door on a Presidents' Day weekend, the 2012 model display helped the museum bring in over 5,000 in attendance.

All modelers, NWSM as well as other organizations, need to thank Tim Nelson for doing a magnificent job in coordinating this massive event.



Dragon 1/35th Scale Jagdpanzer IV L/70 (V) – August 1944 Production w/ Zimmerit

by Eric Christianson

The Jagdpanzer IV L/70 (V) was an improved version of the Jagdpanzer IV with the PaK42 L/70 mounted in place of the shorter PaK39 L/48. It went into production along with the Jagdpanzer IV which it replaced completely by December of 1944. Even though it was released in August of that year, the L/70 (V) was first used in numbers during the Ardennes offensive in December, when approximately 137 were available.

Modelers who have built any of Dragon's more recent releases will be familiar with the boxed contents here. The Jagdpanzer comes in a thin, over-stuffed colorful box containing 14 sprues of soft, light-grey plastic. There is a separate, cardboard-backed collection of clear parts, photo-etch, decals and Magic Track. The track is molded in two shades of grey to help distinguish the 'sided' track-links.

The lower hull is one beautiful, slide-molded piece, as is the back deck, the upper-front hull and the rounded gun mantlet. All the smaller parts that sport a gorgeous zimmerit coating come on a single sprue. The side 'schurtzen' shields that give German assault guns and tank destroyers their distinctive look are single piece affairs that are molded very thin and look to be in proper scale. The attachment points for the shields and related hardware are engineered to make this part of the assembly as simple as I've seen it. Bravo Dragon.

A beautifully molded gun-breech mechanism is included and can be seen if the hatches are left open (or the single-piece top is removed). A thin, plastic antenna is included, along with a radio set pointing to the possibility of this being a command version of the vehicle, even though that is not mentioned anywhere.

A small fret of photo-etch is included which contains engine louvers for the underside of the engine access hatches. These can be posed open or closed. The Jagdpanzer did not carry a lot of markings, and the small decal sheet sporting numbers and crosses for four vehicles reflects this. Rounding out the contents of the box is Dragon's ubiquitous, exploded-view instruction sheet containing 18 assembly steps. Paint callouts include Gunze Aqueous, Gunze Mr. Color, and Model Master.

standard. The instructions, unfortunately, also meet Dragon's standard for instructions. In this step, the instructions reflect the assembly of six return rollers, not the required eight. Looking further, it seems that the return-roller guy was writing for the later version that used the lower number of rollers.

Step two covers the small, rear deck and muffler. The wooden jack-block is also attached here. A lot of these parts are familiar to Dragon model builders, and I



The long gun and 80mm superstructure front made the L/70 (V) front-heavy, with the resultant failures of the rubber-tired wheels. Later models, therefore, were fitted with steel-rimmed wheels at the first two wheel stations. Late models also had three return-rollers instead of four. Dragon's release represented here is of the earlier, all rubber-tired version. With the number of unused parts included, however, future versions of the kit may incorporate these changes and more. Unfortunately, the unused parts do not include any steel wheels. Beware – among the list of unused parts is Part C-23. You will actually need this part in Step 13.

Construction starts with the lower hull and main running gear, no surprises here. The wheels, return rollers and drive sprockets are molded up to Dragon's excellent

think this is a good thing. Other manufacturers seem to re-design common parts, such as a muffler or jack, with every kit. Four holes need to be opened on the back plate. These will receive a variety of rear-deck accoutrement.

Steps three through six finish out the lower hull. You are given three build options (among no less than 28 throughout!). These three decisions involve a limber hitch and what looks like a small, side-mounted mud shield of some kind.

A beautifully-molded radio set is mounted against the inner wall of a bulkhead located aft. Otherwise the bulkhead is a barren piece of plastic. I assume you will be able to see the radio through an open hatch somewhere. If that's the case, you might want to beef-up the rest of the

bulkhead a little as well with parts from the spares box.

Each bogie consists of only four parts, plus the wheels, which is an improvement over the past when many more parts made up these assemblies.

In step six the three return rollers are again referenced when there are actually four (per side). In addition, the instructions describe three bogies per side, when there are actually four. The image, however, correctly shows four rollers and four bogies. Step seven brings in the fenders and track. The right- and left-handed track come in differently shaded plastic and according to the instructions, contain 97 links per side. You have limited access to the track under the fenders, so you may choose to attach the track in this step as the instructions call, rather than waiting until later.

Steps eight, nine and ten address the rear deck, which on the Jagdpanzer L/70, is really the only 'busy' surface you get. Here we attach the engine hatches, spare wheels, pioneer tools, and side air-intakes. You can choose to use the thin plastic engine louvers on the underside of the engine hatches or the photo-etch replacements. Unless you intend to show the hatches open, however, it's hard to rationalize using the brass parts. Either way, these will have to be painted prior to attaching them – the (inside) louvers will be difficult to paint later. Among the pioneer tools, only the axe comes with optional P-E mounting brackets and two versions to use.

Steps eleven and twelve deal with the exquisitely molded main-gun assembly inside the upper hull. Opening the box, I was intrigued with what I found: a completely new design of slide-molding for this part of the tank. Unfortunately, unless you intend to open up that area using hatches or lifting off the entire single-piece roof, the gun assembly will be invisible on the completed kit. Still – it's pretty cool. The following step (14) shows the main gun being attached to the hull, with the outer mantlet portions coming on. There is



an interesting and novel upper/lower design used here – if everything fits! I'll have to wait to see if this design will work when I build it.

Steps fifteen, sixteen and seventeen address the top of the front upper hull. There are several options regarding hatches (open or closed) and their design elements. There are also options for the aft-mounted railings. A clear plastic periscope is provided that can be painted and extended out of a hatch opening. This is the first time I've encountered this in a Dragon kit, although this might be standard fare for turret-less assault guns and tank destroyers.

The final step involves attaching the side skirts, antenna and spare track sections to the vehicle. Dragon took pains to allow the builder the option of hanging the skirts on (without glue) or leaving them off. You can leave them off and not include the attachment points as well. The skirts themselves are wonderfully thin and look pretty neat, but, in my opinion, cover up too much of the Mark IV's distinctive lower chassis. This makes the 'hanging' aspect of the schurtzen especially attractive.

As a German armor enthusiast, I have always loved the low, sleek, and menacing

lines of the Jagdpanzer family of tank destroyers. Like me, perhaps there are many modelers who purchased the old Tamiya kit and left it sitting on the shelf until they could 'master' the intimidating art of applying convincing-looking zimmerit. Well, the wait is over. Along with the King Tiger, Tiger I, PzKpfw IV, Brumbar, and the little Stug – a 'roughed up' version of the Jagdpanzer L/70 is finally here! There are no surprises in the kit, good or bad, so those familiar with Dragon models will find putting this kit together no different from the others. There are A LOT of sprue attachment points and stubs to remove, but those come as a by-product to all of the extraordinary detail provided in the molding. Thank you, Dragon, for finally sending this kit our way.

I recommend this kit to anyone who likes to build and finish late war German AFV's. The simplicity of the original vehicle's design and function translates well into Dragon's release. I would like to thank Dragon USA for providing this kit for review, and to *Internet Modeler* for giving me the opportunity to review it – stay tuned for the full-build article to follow.

Airfix 1/72nd Scale Fairey Swordfish Mk.I

by Stephen Tontoni

Airfix has been pushing up the quality bar in their most recent releases, but the new Swordfish kit pushes up the bar for all the companies that are working in 1/72nd. The level of detail is astounding while fit and engineering is very impressive. I'll speak more of that later. I'll say this though; if someone had shown me this kit last year, without the box, I would not have guessed it came from Airfix. Its equivalent level of complexity and detail could be best compared to a state-of-the-art 1/48th scale kit.

With 125 parts, this won't just fall together, but the 68 steps in the instruction sheet seems a bit granular. Of course you can concatenate some steps; just be cautious. Some of them are separate steps for a reason, and this kit isn't your garden variety 1/72nd plane. It's fairly involved, and as the instructions say, this is not appropriate to undertake for those less than 36 months of age. (This is okay for the three-year-old, but keep your two-year-old away from the glue... is that what they're saying? Really?)

Before we begin talking about the model though, let's do a little Biplane 101. What struts are what? "Cabane" struts connect the fuselage to the upper wing. The Swordfish has an arrangement of cabane struts such that they meet in the middle of the center section of the upper wing, forming a truss. The struts that connect the upper wing to the lower wing are called the "interplane struts". The number of interplane strut sets will determine how many "bays" the wing has. The Swordfish, with two sets of interplane struts on each wing, is a two-bay aircraft. The more bays, the more complicated the kit build is, and the more likely you are to drink heavily. Your intervention may feature instruction sheets.

On to the kit; it's very crisply molded in light gray styrene with no sink marks that I



could find. The wings have very believable texturing, and the fuselage has engraved panel lines although somewhat overstated for 1/72nd scale. After primer, paint, gloss coat and flat coat, those recessed panel lines should be more believable as well. Many delicate parts detail the kit inside and out. With the wide-open cockpit of the Swordfish, you'll be very grateful for the interior detailing. The pilot seat looks a little bit soft, and that should be accented with some photo-etch seat harnesses or something. There's some room for improvement there. You also have the choice of building a torpedo carrier or bomber; all the ordnance is molded and detailed beautifully. It also has extended wing/ folded wing options, which is a very nice touch. The modeler doesn't need to break out a razor saw or figure out how to execute a believable wing fold; they just need to follow the instructions.

Let's get to the cool part - kit engineering. This is the most interesting aspect of the kit as far as I'm concerned because Airfix seems to be re-writing the biplane book. A biplane has different challenges than monoplane does, not the least of which is wing alignment, and Airfix has approached that differently than anyone else that I've seen. And I build a lot of biplanes! The upper wing consists of seven parts; they are the two halves of the center section, the two halves of the outer sections, and the long wing spar that ensures alignment between the center/outer wing sections. That spar part is not used if you choose to fold the wings. Construction of the wing

begins by cementing together the two halves of the center section, trapping the wing spar in between. After that's done, you slide the keyed inner interplane struts into the sides of the wing center section. The struts themselves sort of dangle below at this point. The outer interplane struts are also keyed and drop through slots in the upper wing where they're guaranteed to be straight and secure, then you cement those halves together, trapping the wing spar between them. But wait...that spar is attached to the center section! Correct; you are cementing the wing halves while attaching the outer section of the wing to the center section.

So picture it this way; you simultaneously cement the wing halves, trap the interplane struts, align the wing on the wing spar, and attach the entire outer wing sections to the inner section in one maneuver. I've never seen this approach before. There's a signpost up ahead; next stop, The Twilight Zone.

Another interesting design innovation...the fuselage is made of a right side, left side, and underside. The three pieces have a purpose and I really like it; the lower part has wing stubs that protrude enough to attach the wing to fuselage struts. In other words, the lower wing attached to the wing stub like that with its hefty struts will automatically be aligned, and it's to those stubs that the inner interplane struts are securely attached.

The entire upper wing assembly is then attached to the fuselage, and the lower wings are attached to that. I would expect this to be the most complex part of the entire build. Use great care to dry fit it several times before applying any cement, and by all means, be gentle. I could be wrong, but the interplane struts are all dangling at that point and may be fragile. The lower wing has large holes to accommodate the interplane struts. These are not alignment "pins"; these are plugs that the struts fit into. When you cement the interplane struts in there, they are there to stay, making the wing structure very sturdy. And my own two cents here: do all the painting before attaching this assembly. You may have to touch up a bit, but it's easier to do that than to get between the wings with your airbrush.

The folded wing option is approached a little differently. Without the wing spar, there's less positive connection and that could lead to misalignment. To prevent that, Airfix has provided jigs to align the lower wing stub to the upper wing center section. The jig holds the upper wing center section snugly in place, allowing nearly no room for play. Once that's completely dry you remove the jigs and the center section will be perfectly aligned and as solid as the rock of Gibraltar. If it were made of styrene.



As for detailing, this kit has more than enough for a 1/48th kit, much less a 1/72nd one. I haven't made a careful part count of the interior, but it has somewhere around 20 parts to it. When built, it will be very busy and believable. At this point, I'm wondering if the fuselage will close up

with all those goodies in there. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

Exterior detail is excellent with highlights being a nicely molded and detailed Bristol Pegasus engine and sturdy two piece landing gear struts. Other parts, like part 14D in step 32, are very dainty. I mention that part specifically because I broke it while removing it from the sprue. That part, by the way, is a single piece taking the place of four horizontal stabilizer struts. Again, Airfix wants to idiot-proof the construction. This idiot, though, will not be denied - I snapped one of the struts.

Jumping ahead to the decals, you have two marking options, a bomber from 1940 and a torpedo plane from 1939. The instructions have three view color profiles of each option and they include rigging with each view, but it's not adequate for a two-bay aircraft. You'll need to check your references to rig this beastie. Decals look like they will not be a problem; they are very thin with good register and flat finish.

I recommend this kit whole-heartedly. As you'll have ascertained by the review so far, I'm very impressed by the engineering of the wings; this is the first time I've seen

this approach. I don't see how it will fail. Molding is excellent and the detail rivals a 1/48th kit. \$17.50 retail makes for an excellent bargain.

Does this kit have any weaknesses at all? Sure, there are a few, but nothing to really whine about. I'd like to see the instructions include a clear rigging diagram. Three views are good for markings, but they just don't show rigging well. Isometric drawings reveal that much better. I'll see about replacing the pilot's seat and digging up some PE seat harnesses too. Attaching the upper wing assembly to the fuselage looks a little fiddly, but it should be okay...not a weakness. We're modelers after all; give us a bit of a challenge. And if you build like I do, and paint/decals the upper wing before attaching it, there may be a bit of paint touch-up necessary around the lower wing to fuselage stub joint. Or maybe there won't. I'm not really concerned about any of the "weaknesses" I just mentioned.

The ultimate conclusion is simple: If you want to build a 1/72nd Swordfish, just throw away your Matchbox, Revell, Frog, and old Airfix kits; they are now hopelessly obsolete.



57th Fighter Group 'First in the Blue', by Carl Molesworth

reviewed by Robert Allen

Mount Vernon resident Carl Molesworth is a keen modeler who has attended model shows in the Seattle area, and written articles for the *Seattle Chapter News*. He's best known for writing about the air war in China during WW2, and the Curtiss P-40 series. This recent release in the Osprey "Aviation Elite Units" series doesn't involve the former, but it certainly does the latter.

The 57th Fighter Group flew P-40s and then P-47s in North Africa and Italy from July 1942 until V-E Day. Somewhat overlooked by post-war historians because they featured no big-name aces, they were more noted for their work as a fighter-bomber squadron supporting the ground troops than they were as a fighter squadron engaging enemy aircraft – with one huge exception.

Molesworth's book covers the 57th FG from its formation in January 1941 as the 57th Pursuit Group. There's a bit of a local connection early on, a disastrous cross-country trip from the east coast to McChord Field in Tacoma, during which the Group lost 12 of the 25 P-40s embarked, and suffered the death of four pilots. Perhaps not co-incidentally, the Commanding Officer was replaced a few weeks after.

The bulk of the book covers the Group's service in the MTO, which commenced with a bang, 72 P-40s flying safely off *USS Ranger* to Accra, even though none of the pilots had previously attempted a carrier take-off. Using primary sources, unpublished manuscripts, and numerous interviews and correspondence with Group members, Molesworth paints a picture of the often brutal conditions under which the Group operated. He not only features the pilots, but also the ground crew and administrative staff who worked from dawn

until dusk to allow the pilots to do their job. The evolution of fighter-bomber tactics is discussed, including one pilot's horror at having to strafe German horse-drawn wagons, and seeing the effect the eight machine guns in his P-47 had on the defenseless horses. He sums it up by commenting "Thank God I never had to do it again."

The book also includes numerous lighter moments, even under such conditions,



such as when one of the men wrote a letter to Hormel complaining about the taste of SPAM, and received a letter back stating that they had never sold any SPAM to the Army. Even when the cooks piled up a multitude of SPAM cans and took a picture of one of them sitting on top of the pile, Hormel insisted that they must have received a shipment intended for the Navy. There's also the story of the P-40 pilot who took off on a sortie flying a USAAF P-40 and arrived back at base several hours later flying an RAF one...

One mission covered in detail is the "Palm Sunday Massacre" of April 18, 1943, in which the P-40s of the 57th FG and 324th FG caught a large formation of Luftwaffe Ju 52s attempting to resupply the Afrika Corps. In the ensuing one-sided battle, the 57th FG was credited with 50 victories, over a quarter of their total for the entire war.

The text is complemented by many excellent black-and-white photos, and even a few color ones. There are 32 color profiles by Jim Laurier of the 57th FG's aircraft, and drawings of group and squadron emblems. This is an excellent book, one that fills a gap in WW2 aviation history.



Fujimi 1/20th Scale 1992 Footwork Mugen Honda FA13

by **Tim Liecht, IPMS Grand
Touring and Racing Auto
Modelers**

As is the case with the Japanese kit makers lately, Fujimi has re-released quite a few of their old kits. This classic Formula One kit is one of their nicer offerings and very Tamiya-like in its design. But first, here's some history regarding Mugen.

Mugen Motorsports was founded in 1973 by Hirotochi Honda, son of Honda founder Soichiro Honda. The name Mugen means "Unlimited" so with the word Power added, the name translated to "Unlimited Power". While closely connected to Honda, the team was never owned by Honda Motor Company. Mugen started racing open wheel cars in 1986 in the Formula 3000 series and then moved up to Formula Three in Europe in 1990. In 1991 Mugen prepared V10 Hondas for Tyrrell and they were transferred to the Footwork F1 Team in 1992, with drivers Aguri Suzuki and Michele Alboreto. At the end of the year Mugen switched to Team Lotus and after a dismal season of delays, joined with Ligier the year after. That culminated in their first victory at the 1996 Monaco Grand Prix. Mugen then moved on to Prost Racing for a year and then to Jordan F1 where they scored a 1-2 finish at Spa-Francorchamps with Damon Hill and Ralf Schumacher driving. I am sure the kit was a result of the team's connection with Honda and driver Aguri Suzuki that made it a good seller in Japan and of course, Europe since it is an F1 car model. Footwork never won a race with Mugen Honda engine power. But this isn't the first model kit of a car with no victories.

The kit body is molded in white, with a Coke bottle shape as was very popular in the '90s thanks to Ferrari. It's a very clean and flash-free mold with engraving marks to aid in the bright red decal placement on the sides. The engine/transaxle is a ten-



piece affair along with separate headers, and the gearbox also supports the entire rear suspension that is mounted to it. The carbon fiber tub is about eight pieces total, and very Tamiya-like in its design, with some electrical boxes mounted on top, forward of the engine. The front suspension mounts to the body, and all pivot points are moveable. The brake detail is nice, although on the back side of the discs there are molding depressions on each of them. Interior tub is FIA period correct, with the carbon fiber bolster inside the body at the instrument cluster sur-

rounding the body, which was within the rules back then.

Decals are provided for the instruments and the seat belt harness. Wheels and tires are nicely done with Goodyear tire markings on the decal sheet. The decal sheet is very crisp with tire stickers, and wheel logos provided. I'm glad I bought this kit. I didn't when it was first released and regretted not doing that. This kit is as good as any Tamiya F1 kits from the same era and is a worthy addition to my collection. Get yourself one if you are an F1 modeler.



Revell 1/72nd Scale Handley Page Halifax Mk.I/II

by Stephen Tontoni

I sauntered into the model shop today to goof off a bit after work. Then I saw a pile of very large blue Revell AG boxes on the counter, and was surprised that they'd released a 1/72nd Handley Page Halifax. I had no idea this was coming. The boxes, by the way, are of the rare white buffalo variety; they are sturdy side opening boxes.

First thing that I noticed was the amount of plastic in there. I've counted now; but at the moment, I really wasn't able to breathe well enough to do that. Get this: there are 338 parts on 12 sprues. They come to you in four plastic bags and it's a little bit overwhelming. This is not like some tank kit with 300 parts and 200 of them are the track links, no. This has 338 recognizable parts. A lot of dinosaurs died for our hobby.

The 99-step instruction sheet is laid out clearly and logically. You'll want to study the instructions before even touching the styrene. After you decide which plane you'll model, mark up the instruction sheet to make sure you are following the correct steps, and put aside all parts meant for a different airplane. A bit of criticism here; the instruction sheet doesn't always tell you which option goes with which aircraft. Do your research, cross off stuff that doesn't belong, and put aside parts that you aren't going to use. Simplify, simplify, simplify.

Here are a couple of design options you'll see:

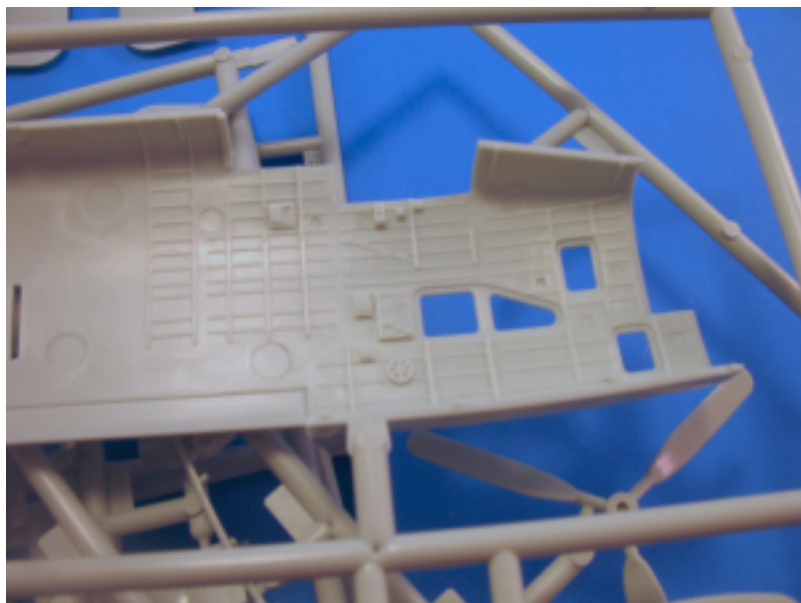
- 1) Fuselage; you will need to open holes specific to each plane
- 2) Engine cowls; there are three styles of intakes/filters
- 3) Engine cowls again; there are four styles of exhausts and exhaust shrouds



- 4) Wings; you will need to open holes specific to each plane
- 5) Tail; two types of vertical stabilizers
- 6) Fuselage again; two styles of dorsal turrets

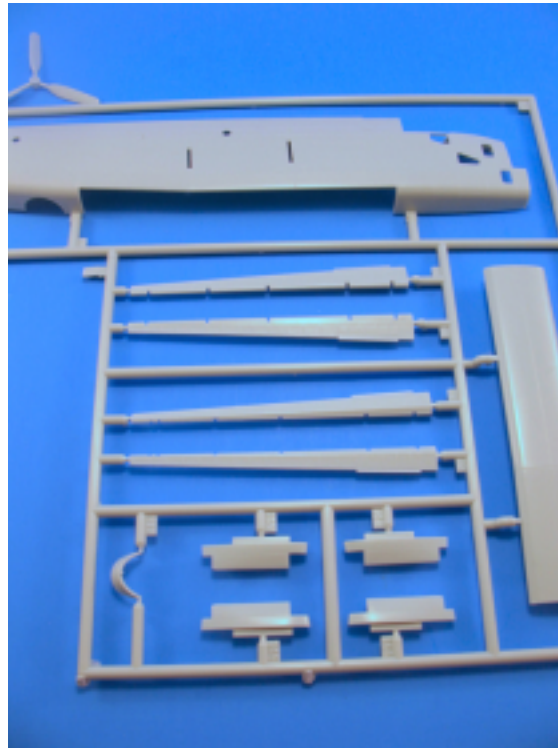
The kit itself; the light gray styrene is very crisply molded. I looked for sink marks and ejector pin marks. No sink marks that I could find, and the ejector pin marks I found were placed coyly at the rear of the cockpit. In fact, they're visible in the picture I snapped of the cockpit sidewall engraving. Do we care? No, we don't; they will not be visible in the completed model.

Speaking of the cockpit, considering that much is not visible, they've included a lot of detail. You construct the cockpit by attaching all its component parts to the floor assembly. That part is something around 10" long and it's the aircraft floor, the upper part of the bomb bay, and the wing spars that stick through the fuselage. Bulkheads, the instrument panel, the bombsight, seats, etc. are all attached to it. The instrument panel has a decal, while Revell has molded in the backs of the instrument dials as they are probably visible. Good job.



Let's look at the wings now. The detailed wheel wells are built as boxes before being sandwiched in the wings when you close up the halves. They look very good and the landing gear attachment to those boxes will be sturdy. Very sturdy, in fact; the struts are multi-piece affairs with solid connections. If the whole kit were that robust, I think you could play with it safely. As mentioned earlier, the engines have multiple intake options, and they look simple enough to assemble. Here's something cool; the wingtips are molded separately from the wings. A wingtip is molded in halves like the wing is and instructions would have you cement the wing halves together, then slip the wingtip onto that. It may be just fine that way, but dry fit a few times; if the widths are different, it will create a step. Another way to do this is to just glue each wingtip half to its corresponding wing half, and no worries about the width. You make sure the wing surface is all plumb then either fill or sand behind, where evil cannot be seen, if necessary. Then you cement the wing halves. It's really easy. Each wingtip has two notches that will accommodate clear styrene navigation lights. Paint them from behind; it looks much better. I like the wings.

Kit control surfaces are all molded separately. Generally, separate control surfaces coming out looking toy-like, and it's not the surfaces themselves. Nine times out of ten, the oversize hinges are ugly. I'll withhold judgment on these for the time being, but I'm going to do a lot of dry-fitting before deciding to how I want to skin this cat. I know one thing though; the



instructions indicate loose hinges. I can pretty much guarantee that mine will be glued.

You can build the kit with the bomb bay doors open or closed. If you want them open, you have to cut them apart yourself. The doors are attached to the fuselage with individual actuators, and they look pretty nice. If you do build it with the bomb bay doors open, I guarantee there will be no filling. The closed bomb bay may require a little filling - or maybe not! I have thoughts around that; I like the bomb bay doors molded separately, and the fuselage molded with the bomb bay closed. That way, if you want doors closed, it's a perfect fit. If open, you just remove the doors from the fuselage halves, then attach your bomb bay doors. The bomb bay itself is not highly detailed really, but it has basic busyness. The bombs though look very good, which count as detail.

Clear parts look pretty good and you have some more choices to make here. For the second aircraft, a Mk.II in 1945 that has only nose glazing, the part is a bit thick. If I

built this variant, I'd thermoform a new nose. The other plane, a Mk.I in 1942, has a nose turret. Revell has provided another clear part that will anchor the turret and connect to the fuselage. That part is very spindly, and is likely to be delicate. You build the turret and slide it into that, then attach the whole assembly to the fuselage. I'm going to study that step a while longer; I'm paranoid that it won't fit the fuselage and leave a lot of remedial work. Maybe it would be possible to fit everything but the turret and slip that in last. I have to think about that.

That's more or less the size of it. This is an excellent kit with far too many positives to list, so I'll jump right into areas that could bear improvement. Some assemblies look a bit more complicated

than they need to be. The added complexity of multiple options could cause fit issues, so I strongly recommend doing a lot of dry fits before cementing anything. As mentioned earlier, I'd have approached the bomb bay doors differently, but that's not really criticism either. For fit, the wing tips, engine cowls, and nose assembly seem likely places that might have issues. Just take your time and assume that they may not fit. If they don't, you're ready for it and know what to do. If they do, celebrate. Instructions are mostly clear, but where there are choices to be made, I want sub-steps that are clearly marked for which aircraft that option is used. As it is now, it just shows you a question mark; c'mon man. These are just my thoughts when looking at the kit and reviewing the instruction sheet, not really dings.

If you have any interest in RAF bombers of WWII, you will want this kit. If you'd like a little chuckle, put the Matchbox Halifax kit next to this and do the Pepsi Challenge. I picked up my kit this afternoon for \$34.99. Had the MSRP been a lot higher than that, I would not have been surprised. But it's not!

Dragon 1/72nd Scale Apollo 10 CSM + LM + LES

by Chris Banyai-Riepl

The lunar landing missions of NASA mark the pinnacle of human space exploration, as they remain the only time humans have stepped on the surface of something other than earth. The technological achievements to get to that stage were immense, even more so in an era before supercomputers, which makes the accomplishments even greater. Given all of this great success of the Apollo program, it is somewhat surprising that we have not been inundated with detailed models of all the various vehicles and equipment used for these missions. Most of the model kits out there represent pre-production and prototype vehicles, rather than the actual operational Apollo/Saturn modules. Dragon has decided to address this lack with a whole range of new kits.

This release in Dragon's growing Saturn V/ Apollo series covers the Apollo 10 Command Service Module (CSM), Lunar Module (LM), and Launch Escape System (LES). Launched on May 18, 1969, Apollo 10 was a full scale lunar orbit LM test, and the LM (named 'Snoopy') descended to under 50,000ft over the lunar surface before separating the descent stage and returning to the CSM. Snoopy was eventually separated from the CSM and put into a solar orbit, where it remains to this day. In fact, a group of amateur astronomers in the United Kingdom is attempting to locate Snoopy, using data from NASA and the Faulkes Telescope Project. As Snoopy is the only surviving operational spacecraft, finding it would be a great achievement.

The kit comes molded in black, gray, and clear plastic, and the level of detail throughout is absolutely stellar. When finished this will definitely look stunning, and for those who don't necessarily have the space for a full Saturn V stack, this kit will provide most of the fascinating bits, and display it in an interesting manner (more on that later).

Construction begins with the CSM. This is made up of a three piece barrel, which would be a difficult assembly to align, but the kit provides two rings to put the pieces around. This is a great way to keep the detail crisp on the barrel, while keeping the assembly easy. The capsule portion is molded in two main pieces, a top and bottom, which again provides great molded-in detailing and minimizes seams. The docking module is made up of five separate pieces and once done will look quite nice. The control jets are separate and nicely done, while the main rocket engine is done as one piece and fits into a separate lower CSM piece. Once together the CSM will look quite nice, but much of the capsule detail will be hidden by the LES.



The Lunar Module is probably the most complex assembly in this kit. The ascent stage is made up from quite a few pieces. This complex assembly is required to keep the detailing as crisp as possible, and while complicated, it looks like Dragon has taken the time to engineer it well enough to ensure positive alignment. There are nine major pieces to build the main ascent stage, upon which go quite a few smaller

details such as antennae and control nozzles. The descent stage is simpler, as that is molded as one main piece that gets separate folded landing legs and descent rocket. There are some other smaller details that fit onto this piece, and the ascent stage fits onto the top of the descent stage via a large peg.

Finally, we get to the LES. This is very simple to put together, especially after building the LM. The rocket system is built up from two main pieces, which then get separate rocket nozzles. This completed assembly then fits onto a six-piece strut system that then fits onto the cover that fits over the CSM capsule. The CSM then fits onto the next stage, which is the interesting part of this kit, as it's molded in clear. This will allow the finished model to show the LM in place, but still show the complete spacecraft upper stage of the Saturn V. All of this then fits onto the included base, providing a great finished display.

There is a small decal sheet that provides various national markings, stenciling, and details for all the various parts. The painting and decal instructions are provided in color on the bottom of the box, which is great for modelers looking to see what you get in the kit, but can be a bit challenging for actually applying the decals as it's not easy to prop up the instructions to look at while doing the work.

You'll note that I have not touched on the accuracy of this kit. Taken as a whole, it's quite good, and much better than any other injection-molded kit out there. However, for the purists, it will fall short in many areas. Dragon, understandably, wants to get as much mileage out of their toolings as possible, so at best these kits will be a generic Apollo/Saturn V model. Each mission featured differences in the CSM and LM, and tooling these kits to reflect those subtle differences would have been an expensive proposition. As such, these kits should form a great starting

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Airfix 1/72nd Scale Curtiss Hawk 81A-2

by Robert Allen

Is there any military aviation marking more iconic than the shark mouth used on the Curtiss P-40? Considering its fame, it's surprising that the early P-40B/C and Tomahawk hasn't been better served in 1/72nd scale. There's the old Frog kit, the Academy knock-off of the Frog kit, and a Trumpeter version from about five years ago that I haven't built, but which received mediocre reviews. There's a need for a good kit in this scale, and the new Airfix molding, while not perfect, goes a long way to filling the gap.

The early P-40s were most famous for their use by the American Volunteer Group of the Chinese Air Force (the Flying Tigers), but they were also extensively used by the USAAF and RAF. Airfix has issued this kit in the markings of all three, but as three different kits! The standard kit, marketed as a "Curtiss Hawk 81-A-2" comes in AVG livery. Included with a Mitsubishi A6M2 Zero in the "Dogfight Doubles" series, it's a USAAF P-40B Warhawk flown by George Welch of the 47th PG at Pearl Harbor. And the boxing as a "starter set" with cement, paints, and paint brushes, is of an RAF Tomahawk IIB of No 112 Squadron, the originator of the shark mouth on the P-40. I've only seen the AVG



boxing, but I assume that the plastic in all three variants is the same, with just the decals and instructions different.

The art on the end-opening box is quite stunning, showing AVG P-40s strafing a line of parked Japanese A6M Zeroes. Unfortunately, it also propagates a myth that I thought had long been put to bed – the AVG did not fight against IJNAF Zeroes, but against the Ki-27s and Ki-43s of the IJAAF. The Navy's Zeroes were long gone from the theater before the AVG became operational. Inside the box are 47 parts molded on two gray sprues and one clear one. The panel lines are engraved, and look fine to me. The clear parts are packaged in their own bag to prevent damage. There's a decal sheet for one AVG option, and a four-page, 15-step instruc-

tion sheet. There's a color four-view on the box bottom showing the paint scheme and decal placements.

There's a lot to like about the engineering of this kit. The cockpit is glued to the lower wing, and then inserted into the fuselage when the wing is cemented to the fuselage. That's accurate, because on the actual aircraft, the wing was the cockpit floor. Detail is simple but adequate, seat, stick, and instrument panel (with a decal), and the rudder pedals molded on the cockpit floor. There's nice detail on the cockpit sidewalls. There's a pilot figure, should you choose to use it. The upper engine cowling is a slide molding, which allows for reasonable depth on the intake, and captures the lines of the nose quite well. The most obvious flaw in the kit is the propeller, whose blades seem much too narrow.

The lower rear cowl flaps are included in both open and closed form, which is a nice touch. Separate wheels are given for the lowered and raised undercarriage options – the wheels-down option includes wheels with separate discs, which is good for painting. They are also weighted, and the engineering includes a square peg on the undercarriage leg to ensure that they are at the correct angle. The tail wheel doors, if you build the aircraft with the undercarriage lowered, are one piece which slots into the lower rear fuselage, also (theoretically) ensuring the proper angle of the doors.



Two pitot heads are included, one straight one, and the hooked pitot often seen on RAF Tomahawks.

The single decal option is for aircraft "68" of the 3rd Squadron, AVG, flown by Charles Older. The decals are well-printed, and include a multitude of stencils for this scale, but the blue in the Chinese roundels looks much too light, at least to my eyes.

I really like this kit. It's simple, well-engineered, and seems pretty accurate except for the prop blade. I'd also rather see multiple decal options in one box, rather than spread around three different issues, but that's Airfix's prerogative. It's also ridiculously inexpensive for a kit these days – I picked up mine from Skyway Model Shop for just \$7.25. Now if we could only get a nice 1/72nd Merlin-powered P-40F/Kittyhawk Mk.II...



Dragon Apollo 10

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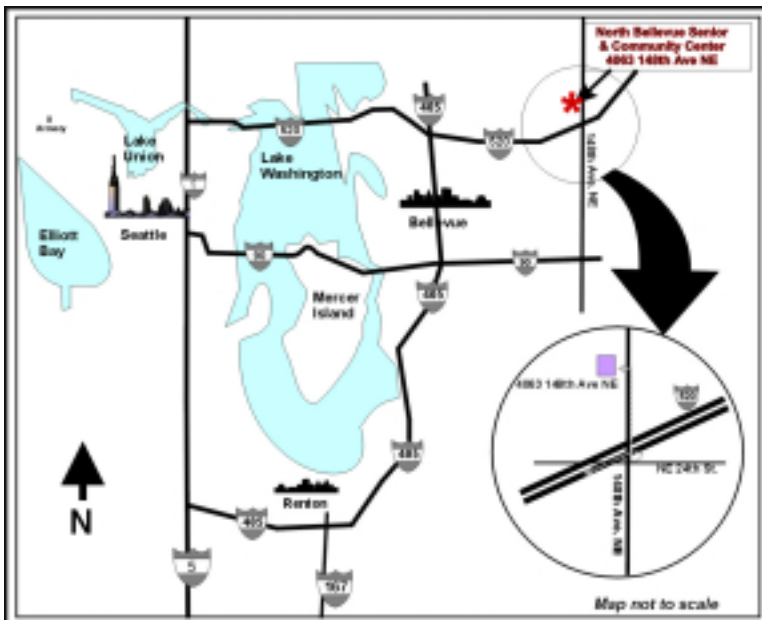
point, and with a bit of extra work could be made into accurate representations of mission-specific spacecraft. For those looking for a detailed representative example of the Apollo program, these kits will build up out of the box quite well and will definitely look the part.

Out of all the 1/72 Apollo kits Dragon has released, this one is the most appealing to me as it provides the entire spacecraft stack in one kit, allowing the modeler to display a significant portion of the Saturn V without taking up large amounts of space. My thanks to Dragon USA for the review sample.

[Thanks to Chris Banyai-Riepl and www.internetmodeler.com for permission to use his, Stephen's, and Eric's, articles. - ED]

Meeting Reminder

March 10



North Bellevue Community/Senior Center 4063-148th Ave NE, Bellevue

Directions: From Seattle or from I-405, take 520 East to the 148th Ave NE exit. Take the 148th Ave North exit (the second of the two 148th Ave. exits) and continue north on 148th until you reach the Senior Center. The Senior Center will be on your left. The Center itself is not easily visible from the road, but there is a signpost in the median.