

May 2019  
Vol 43, Issue 5

# The Pylon



*The newsletter of the Western Reserve Chapter of the International Plastic Modelers Society*

## Next Meeting:

Sunday, May 19  
Euclid Public Library  
631 E.222<sup>nd</sup> St.  
1:15PM

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Last Chance to  
Order WR Shirts

Build and BS  
Meeting



## From the President

I recently had an interesting and educational experience that I wanted to share with my fellow Western Reserve modelers. During a visit with my parents in the beginning of May, my father and I took an excursion to the Gilmore Car Museum in Hickory Corners, Michigan.

Let me start by saying that the Gilmore Car Museum overall is remarkable. The museum was started in the 1960s to accommodate founder David S. Gilmore's ever-increasing vintage automobile collection. David Gilmore joined and would later become



President and General Manager of The Upjohn Company of Kalamazoo, Michigan when his brother-in-law, Harold Upjohn suddenly died. After encouragement from his wife, Genevieve, Mr. Gilmore bought 90 acres of land about halfway between Detroit and Chicago and turned his private collection into a museum. Today the 90-acre campus features over 400 vehicles and six on-site partner museums. The Gilmore Car Museum also contains numerous interesting architectural features including an 1897 barn that was moved 45 miles (board by board) and a 1941 diner that was moved from Connecticut.

As amazing as the Gilmore is, my dad and I were primarily visiting the museum to take in a special temporary exhibition of Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild models. The Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild was a national design contest organized by the Fisher Body Division of General Motors. The annual competition ran from 1930 until 1968 and was open to boys between the ages of 11 and 20 in two divisions (junior and senior). Initially, the competition consisted of building a 1/18 scale Napoleonic Carriage (featured on the Fisher Body Division's logo) from a set of



plans and detailed instructions ordered by contestants. By 1937, with the increasing interest in car styling, the Craftsman's Guild introduced a new category – designing and building a 1/12 scale model “Dream Car”. The interest in the car design competition was so overwhelming that the Napoleonic Coach was eventually dropped.



The practical effect of the competition was to give boys an opportunity to express themselves artistically through automotive design while at the same time improving their technical skills. General Motors rewarded their efforts with significant prizes. State winners received substantial cash awards. Regional winners won all-expense paid trips to Detroit to participate in the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild National Convention. These trips also included tours of the GM Styling Studios and intimate conversations with professional designers. Overall 387 National winners were awarded college scholarships. In the end, the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild was very successful at identifying talent at an early age. During its 38-year history, the Craftsman's Guild enrolled 10 million U.S.

teenagers with more than 39,000 carriages and model cars eventually built for the annual contests. By 1957, 35% of GM designers were Guildsmen and in 1980, 25 Guildsmen were *still* working on the GM design staff.

The Gilmore's exhibition is the largest Fisher Body Craftsman Guild model collection assembled since the conclusion of the competition, featuring over 100 unique vehicles made by 50 Guildsmen. The models ranged from family sedans to two-seaters and were constructed from a wide variety of materials. Most had four wheels, but several designers explored three-wheeled cars. While a few of the models had been restored, many of them were still in their original condition. Car models were judged on scale fidelity, workmanship, painting and finish, originality of design, artistic merit, and practicality of design. As incredible as the models were, the men who designed them were equally compelling. Today, all the builders are at least 66 years old and they each have a unique story to tell. Not surprisingly, many studied design in college and went on to successful careers designing for Ford, General Motors, Volkswagen, Volvo, Studebaker, Chrysler, Porsche, Renault, Boeing and even Kenner Toys to name just a few.

This exhibition offered a rare look at individuals who built scale models as boys and then went on to design and build full-scale products as men. It was truly a worthwhile event. The Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild Exhibition runs through October 1, 2019. For more information visit the Gilmore Car Museums website here <https://www.gilmorecarmuseum.org/>.

See you at the May meeting.

Jim Wentzel





## Meeting Minutes from April

The April Western Reserve meeting was held on Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup>, with 15 members in attendance. We started the meeting off with officer reports and Ted followed through with a treasury report. The treasury is doing well and so far we have collected \$55 for the Christmas party fund. We also talked about the club By-Laws for a bit and also discussed the decal bank that Tyrone Walker wants to start some more.

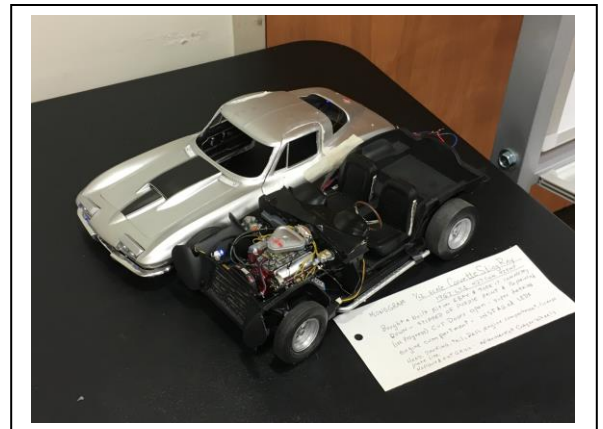
In old business there were reports about some of the recent contests like the one in Pittsburgh at the end of March. Western Reserve was well represented with a half dozen members attending, including Jim Davis, Kirk Ballash, Dave Douglass, Rob Lee and myself. It was also nice to see a couple of familiar faces at the meeting that we haven't seen in a little while, Robby Goldberg and Bob Smith were two of them. Good to see you back, guys!

Under new business was the mention of printing out new business cards for the club. It was agreed that this is a good idea because if we are at shows, hobby shops or other events like the Lost Nations air show in the summer we can have the cards on hand to pass out to potential new members. Don Nehez spoke up and reminded us that he still has a good number of them at home and he will get them back to the club. Jim Wentzel proposed the idea of having another Western Reserve meeting at Stewart's Hobby shop like we did a couple of years back. Everybody seemed to like this idea and hopefully we will be able to do that this summer.

Kirk mentioned the IPMS/USA National Officer election and the opportunity to voice your opinion about starting a discussion about having either 1, 2, 3 judging or G-S-B judging at the Nationals. There is *no* actual move towards this change, just a poll to see if the national membership wants to start a discussion.

We talked about last month's what the heck is that picture. If you remember correctly it was the US Army's "The Beetle" mobile manipulator vehicle from 1958-1962. We also talked about the current month's Buckminster Fuller designed car while we were at it.

With our new schedule April was a contest month for us and the theme was Sea Animals. We had a nice turn out of models both in the theme side and the non-theme side. Ted Bamber brought in an Airfix 1/72 scale Bristol Beaufighter while Robby Goldberg did a Hasegawa 1/72 F4U Corsair egg plane. Tyrone brought in his Meng USS Lexington ton ship





model. Bob Smith had his Revell 1/25 scale 1971 Plymouth Cuda, while Jim Davis brought in his vintage Monogram Albatross seaplane. I myself brought in a Dragon 1/72 T-34 Model 1943 tank.

We also had several in progress models on the table, starting with Robby's 1/48 scale Spitfire and Jim Davis' Monogram 1/12 scale 1967 Corvette and last but not least my A-Model 1/72 Yak 1 Russian fighter.

During the meeting we took a break to sell some raffle tickets and gather some judges together to help judge the contest.



The winners were as follows: in the theme category of Sea Animals third place went to Jim's Stingray, second place to Jim Davis's Grumman Albatross and a first to Bob Smith's 1971 Plymouth Barracuda. On the non-theme side the winners were as follows: third place to Robby's egg plane Corsair, second place to Tyrone's USS Lexington and first place to my T-34 tank. Thanks to everyone who brought something in for the contest and a big thank you to those that helped judge.

On the show and tell table we had Kirk's Revell Star Wars Republic Venator class Star Destroyer in progress. Kirk also brought in a Hobby Boss USS Pegasus 1:200 scale hydrofoil ship and a display base of printed water on which you can display your built ship or submarine models. I think the base is a good idea and come in different sizes. It's a nice simple way of having a good-looking base for your model without having to go through all the trouble and effort of making one yourself.

And that wraps things up! The May Western Reserve meeting will be held on Sunday the 19th. It's a Build and BS meeting so be sure to bring something to work on. Here's looking forward to seeing you all there!

Jon Hudak, WR Secretary





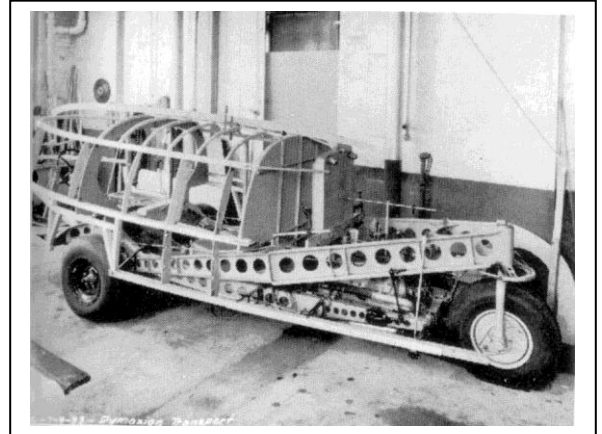
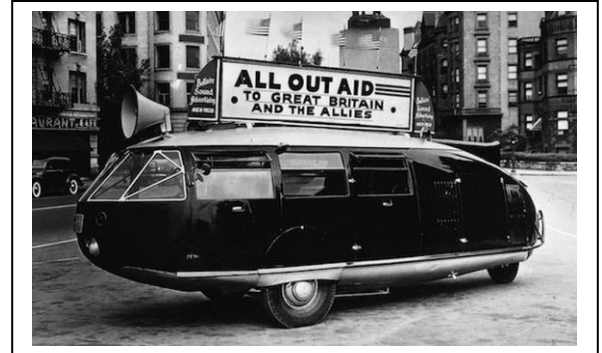
## What the Heck is That?

Last month the *What the Heck?* was the Dymaxion Car, designed by R. Buckminster Fuller, the same fellow known world-wide for his geodesic dome architecture. The name derived from a portmanteau of the words **dynamic**, **maximum** and **tension**, which summarized the goal of many of Fuller's visionary ideas.

The Dymaxion Car was designed by Fuller, engineered by famed aviation pioneer and naval architect Starling Burgess and had sculptor Isamu Noguchi involved in the futuristic teardrop designed body. Fuller had dreams of an Omni-Media Transport, a vehicle that wouldn't be confined to roads but could hop off the road at will, fly about as deftly as a bird and then settle back into traffic. The Dymaxion was a step towards that end.

The body was an ash frame with aluminum body panels built on a unique two-frame chassis built of lightweight chromoly steel (aircraft grade stuff), stretching nearly 20-feet in length in an era when the average car was around 15-feet long. It was front-wheel driven with power coming from a Ford L-Head 221ci V-8 engine producing 75 or 85 hp, depending upon the source, with a third wheel in the back used for steering. The rear wheel could turn up to 90 degrees, allowing the Dymaxion to turn within its own length (there are great videos on YouTube if you want to see it in action). The car could carry 11 passengers, travel at 90 mph and get 30 miles to the gallon. The Dymaxion was exhibited at a Bronx race track where it set a speed record and gained praise for not sliding or drifting around the track as other race cars did. I did find sources saying it topped out at 128 mph but I'm not sure if it was at this exhibition.

The two-frame design provided a great deal of suspension, allowing it to run smoothly on roads and "zoom across open fields with the agility of a light plane." The first frame carried the engine and drift shaft, while the second frame was hinge-and-spring connected to the first and supported by the steerable tail wheel. The body was on its own frame and sprung directly from the front axle. Unfortunately while this design was great for smooth rides it was more than a handful for the average driver and in high winds the aerodynamic car would be pushed to turn into the wind. Only trained and/or qualified drivers were allowed to drive the Dymaxion and Fuller realized it could not be made available to the general public without improvements. Still, in 1934 Noguchi drove one car on an extended trip through Connecticut with noted authors and socialites as passengers without incident and the surviving Car #2 is believed to have more than 300,000 miles on it.



The auto industry of the day expressed interest in the Dymaxion and Fuller's ideas. Packard, Studebaker and Curtiss-Wright, as well as Henry Ford, Henry Kaiser and Walter Chrysler apparently considered marketing the car. Walter Chrysler said Fuller had "produced exactly the car [he had] always wanted to produce", when his company had set out to design the highly advanced, aerodynamic Airflow, but warned Fuller that his design would meet considerable resistance as it would make every other car on the road obsolete, threatening the wholesale dealer distribution and finance network.

The fate of the three Dymaxion cars span the full range of what happens to all cars. Car #1 was involved in a fatal accident during the 1933 Chicago World's Fair when a car driven by the Chicago South Park Commissioner hit it at 70mph, causing it roll over. The driver, race car driver Francis Turner, was killed when the canvas-covered roof framing collapsed and the passengers, including the Air Minister of France, were injured. (The Commissioner left the scene and until the inquest was completed months later the press blamed the Dymaxion's unconventional design. The Dymaxion design was later found not to be a factor). It was repaired and sold to the director of the automotive division of the US Bureau of Standards. It was destroyed there by a fire in 1943.

Car #2, completed in 1934, was built on order of a group of English auto enthusiasts, but they refused to take delivery after the fatal accident involving Car #1. The car was then sold to some of Fuller's mechanics in Bridgeport. It seemed to have been lost from public knowledge until sometime in the 1970's when it was found (though not being used as a chicken coop as some rumors have said) and put up for sale through Hemmings Motor News. It was owned by a man in Kettering, Ohio for a time and later by the legendary car collector Bill Harrah (1400 cars in his collection when he passed in 1978) it eventually ended up with the National Automobile Museum in Reno where the exterior has been restored and is now on display.

Car #3, also completed in 1934, was shown at the 1934 Chicago World's Fair. After the fair it was sold many times and then it too disappeared. It was found again in Brooklyn 1943 and purchased for Fuller by a friend in Wichita where it was restored to prime condition. Unfortunately it again disappeared and was later found to have been cut up from scrap by a local junkyard dealer during the Korean War.

A couple of faithful replicas have been built and test driven by the very brave. You can find a number of articles written by those daring souls online.



Congrats to Fred H, Robby G, Doc S and Jim W. Jim D also knew it but didn't speak up until after I gave the answer. Also, apologies to Doc S who got the GE "Beetle" correct but your humble (read: absent-minded) editor forgot to add him to the congrats list.

This month we are looking at a weird winged subject. Good luck.

Kirk Ballash

## Some more Fun Websites to Visit

Members have sent along a couple more sites to waste time on instead of building. Enjoy.

*From Dave V:*

Flying Heritage & Combat Armor Museum Me 262: [http://warbirdsnews.com/warbird-restorations/fhcams-me-262-warpaint-unveiled.html?fbclid=IwAR1qFUmlasQEwoGVFVRZC6cF8GrU5laXH\\_Gb7D1DUIApy7X8jRhJNKR-TRs](http://warbirdsnews.com/warbird-restorations/fhcams-me-262-warpaint-unveiled.html?fbclid=IwAR1qFUmlasQEwoGVFVRZC6cF8GrU5laXH_Gb7D1DUIApy7X8jRhJNKR-TRs)

Aircraft accidents – Who's Side Are You On?: <http://warbirdinformationexchange.org/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=69513>

*From Joe B*

Angels of War – Flares and Acrobatics (C-130, Su-27): <https://youtu.be/qXhXHoVFMvI>

Air Force Funny Crew: <https://youtu.be/tejqAjCenAq>.

*From Bob Taylor*

Guide to US Museum Ships: <https://news.usni.org/2015/05/22/the-naval-history-and-hnsa-guide-to-u-s-museum-ships>

If you find a site worth sharing send me a link and I'll put here for the rest of the club to enjoy and distract from actual modeling.

## From the Editor

This will be your last chance to order a new dark blue edition of the WR Club shirt. The prices are the same, \$10 for a T-Shirt and \$15 for a Polo/Golf Shirt. Get you order and your money to Ted and we'll place the order this month with the plan to have them in time for the IPMS/USA National Convention in Chattanooga this August.

May is a Build and BS meeting. Bring along something to work on and enjoy good conversation, and occasional BS, with your fellow modelers.

Kirk Ballash



*Tsundoku* means “to let reading materials pile up in one’s home and never read them” in Japanese.

Your humble Editor has a serious *tsundoku* problem.



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*Region IV Newsletter Editor of  
the Year 2015, 2016 and 2017*

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The **International Plastic Modelers Society** is dedicated to promoting the hobby of plastic modeling through meetings, demos, seminars, conventions, contests and most importantly through friendship and enjoyment of the hobby.

Visit us on the web at or join, either online or with the form at right and enjoy the full color magazine, discussion forums and vast knowledge and experience to help you enjoy the hobby to the fullest.

## Upcoming Events

### Western Reserve Meetings and Events

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| May 19, 2019 | General meeting at Euclid Library Lake room – Build & BS Meeting (bring something to work on)     |
| Jun 15, 2019 | General meeting at Euclid Library Lake room – Seminar or Demo TBD                                 |
| Jul 20, 2019 | General meeting at Euclid Library Lake room – Quarterly contest: theme of “ <i>Land Animals</i> ” |
| Aug 24, 2019 | General meeting at Euclid Library Lake room – Build & BS Meeting (bring something to work on)     |
| Sep 22, 2019 | General meeting at Euclid Library Lake room – Seminar or Demo TBD                                 |

### IPMS and Regional Events

*For any show listed go to the IPMS/USA Upcoming Events page for more information, or if you don't have web access contact Kirk Ballash*

#### 2019

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| May 18, 2019          | MMCL Invitational – Louisville, KY  |
| Aug 3-4, 2019         | Thunder over Michigan air show featuring F4U Corsairs – Willow Run Airport, Ypsilanti, MI |
| <b>Aug 7-10, 2019</b> | <b>IPMS/USA National Convention – Chattanooga, TN</b>                                     |
| Jun 8, 2019           | Mayfield Annual Car Cruise – Mayfield Village, OH   |
| Jun 15, 2019          | Willoughby 24 <sup>th</sup> Cruise-In – Willoughby, OH                                    |
| Jun 15, 2019          | Summer Swap Meet – Sharon, PA   |
| Sep 21, 2019          | SVASCON 35 Annual Show – Sharon, PA   |
| Oct 19, 2019          | CSM Annual Show – Cincinnati, OH  |
| <b>Nov 3, 2019</b>    | <b>Cleveland Model Show Annual Show – Cleveland, OH</b>                                   |

Know of an event coming up? Let me know and watch this space for more!

## IPMS/USA MEMBERSHIP FORM

IPMS No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ If Renewing \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (required by P.O.) \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership  Adult, 1 Year: \$30  Adult, 2 Years: \$58  Adult, 3 Years: \$86

Junior (Under 18 Years) \$17  Family, 1 Year: \$35 (Adult + \$5, One Set Journals) How Many Cards? \_\_\_\_\_

Canada & Mexico: \$35  Other / Foreign: \$38 (Surface) Checks must be drawn on a US bank or international money order

Payment Method:  Check  Money Order

Chapter Affiliation, (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

If Recommended by an IPMS Member, Please List His / Her Name and Member Number:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ IPMS No.: \_\_\_\_\_

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