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Members of the Nashua-based Granite State Modelers dedicated to their craft

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By LORETTA JACKSON Correspondent

NASHUA – The cat jumped on the machine gun.

The feline could have lost at least one of its nine lives with the move, except for the fact that the machine gun was only an inch long.

The weapon was a component of a World War II airplane kit assembled by Rod Currier, a Thornton resident and secretary of the Granite State Modelers, a club populated by those who enjoy making detailed plastic models of almost anything.

Currier, displaying the completed Japanese warplane at the Nashua Public Library during the May monthly meeting of the club, expressed relief that no extensive damage was done by the curious and quick-pawed pet.

Some 20 members in attendance that night, from a membership base of about 40, brought their current projects to share during the show-and-tell portion of the meeting. Each had a chance to exhibit a project and talk about the work, its difficulties, how it was painted or accessorized, and other tidbits of about its completion.

The club was founded in 1987. The group draws membership from New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Most of the members know all too well not to trust a cat, a dog, a small child or anyone else – when there is within crunching distance an intricate plastic model airplane sporting dozens of tiny parts, or any other masterpiece in the making.

Club member Pete Davis, of Nashua, felt adequately secure when he recently shared some model airplanes, ships, cars and spacecraft with patrons at the Merrimack Public Library. The display case there is of sturdy glass construction and fully cat-proof.

His contributions were exhibited throughout May, and included some beautifully detailed works.

Members of the Granite State Modelers, a chartered chapter of the International Plastic Modelers Society, are men, women and teen hobbyists who take great pride in constructing, painting and accessorizing plastic model kits or accessories designed from scratch. Popular among the constructions are airplanes, tanks, boats and plenty of science-fiction craft such as starships.

Almost anything that moves along a road, under the sea or through the sky has an admirer intent on building a plastic scale model of the transport. A steady hand and an eye for detail are the prerequisites to enjoying the hobby.

Guy Lessard, the club's president, and Mac Johnston, vice president, attended the meeting at the Nashua Public Library and brought their latest works. Lessard, of Manchester, recently completed a pair of railroad-crossing guard sheds. He held one in the palm of his hand to better show its detail – a crossing gate, windows and a door that opened and closed.



Correspondent photo by LORETTA JACKSON Members of the Granite State Modelers whose works have been displayed at the Merrimack Public Library include, from left, seated, Jack Sutcliffe, of Franklin; Guy Lessard, of Manchester; Rod Currier, of Thornton; and Mac Johnston, of Salisbury. Standing, Chuck Converse, of Manchester; Pete Davis, of Nashua; and Ed Mele, of Manchester.

MORE INFORMATION

Granite State Modelers monthly meeting of hobbyists

WHEN: 7-9 p.m. on the third Monday of the month.

WHERE: Nashua Public Library, 2 Court St.

MORE INFORMATION: home.comcast.net/~vf84.

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"The hardest part was getting the glazing in the windows," Lessard said. "Everything had to fit perfectly."

Jack Sutcliffe, of Franklin, showed off two World War II airplanes, both exquisitely detailed.

Brian Dugrenier, of Manchester, came away from his first club meeting with not one, but two model kits he won as door prizes.

Across the table, Chuck Converse, of Manchester, showed members a primo replica of a Dodge hemi engine. He purchased the kit at a flea market for \$5 instead of the \$30 a kit of its kind normally would cost in a retail store.

The members of the club, and other clubs from New Hampshire and elsewhere, are busy readying a variety of projects to be entered in the Granite State Modelers' annual convention – this year, deemed GraniteCon XX.

The 20th annual convention is scheduled for 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 21, at the Elks Club, 120 Daniel Webster Highway, Nashua.

The gathering traditionally draws about 300 entrants who compete in 41 categories.

Plastic models at the convention are judged on overall workmanship, a classification that includes assembly, painting, decals and markings, and accuracy. Entry categories span a wide range of plastic models – aircraft, military vehicles, ships, civilian vehicles, figures and other, a category including science fiction and fantasy. Junior participants, younger than 16 compete in similar divisions.

Carrier, who has been in the club for 15 years, said he finds building models a relaxing activity.

He mostly enjoys building military planes, but his works over the years have reflected whatever he is interested in at the moment.

He said the club provides an opportunity for people to share what they have accomplished and tips on everything from painting techniques to building scenery and accessories for their models.

"The meetings are a time we all get together and shoot the breeze about what we're doing," Carrier said. "A lot of other people build, but they don't get together to show what they've built."

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