

Do you enjoy building scale models, or have you ever thought about building a scale model?

If so, there's a scale model club right here in our area that you'll want to look into. The North Central West Virginia Scale Modelers, or NCWVSM for short, is a non-profit organization; formed in 1997 after a handful of local scale modelers got together one evening to talk shop.

Scott Owen, one of the founding members, says that the club was formed quite by chance. "While attending modeling events hosted by other clubs outside West Virginia, it was surprising to learn just how many of us came from West Virginia. From there, it seemed only natural for us to form our own club". Since then, the club has grown considerably. "We have members from all over the northern part of the state, from Morgantown to Weston, and Rowlesburg to Parkersburg. We have a website and a quarterly newsletter. Dues are intentionally kept at a minimum to cover operating costs".

The NCWVSM started as a group of guys who like to build models. Since then it has grown to include families. "Several of our members are fathers and sons, and fathers and daughters", says Owen, "Scale modeling is a great family activity. In this day and age it seems the family unit spends less time doing things together. Scale modeling is a great way for the family to spend some quality time together. There's something very satisfying and fulfilling when you can look at a completed model that you and your child spent time building, detailing and painting. Plus it gives you the chance to work together and talk. Patience, communication and understanding are not only key elements in scale modeling, but in family relationships as well. I think that's why it's become such a popular family activity".

One of the keys to success of the NCWVSM is the diversity of its members and the ideas each member brings to the meetings. The members model anything from cars, tanks, ships and aircraft to science fiction and figures. The age groups range from children to seniors and skill levels vary from beginners to advanced modelers. There is always something to be learned even by advanced modelers. Sharing ideas is what it's all about. The hobby industry continues to grow with new products, techniques, and materials continually being introduced. You'd be amazed at the accuracy and realism that can be achieved in today's scale models. It truly is just like the real thing... only smaller.

Club member, Todd Moncrief, says, "Since I joined this club I have learned more about scale modeling than I ever dreamed. In a short period of time I went from beginner level to building contest-winning models. It would have never been possible without a great club like the NCWVSM. It's nice to meet so many other people who share a common interest and I place great value in what this club has to offer".

One of the highlights of the NCWVSM is their annual model contest and swap meet called ModCon, held each Fall. The event is sponsored by area merchants and attracts modelers from West Virginia and the surrounding states. It has become the premiere scale modeling show in the region. Hundreds of stunning models compete at ModCon for the coveted trophies the club has become synonymous with awarding. A large number of vendors attend, offering all types of model kits for sale or trade. It's a great opportunity to meet other modelers in the region, make new friends and learn new techniques.

Other benefits of membership include club discounts on model kits, field trips to local modeling events, and participation in special projects conducted within the club. The club is often invited to make presentations at area schools and youth groups on the positive impact of scale modeling. Owen says, "If our club can help make one troubled kid's life in some way better, or get him interested in something other than drugs or crime, then it's worth it".

The NCWVSM meets the second Tuesday of each month at White Hall Book and Craft in Fairmont. It is the perfect meeting place for the NCWVSM as the store contains a large supply of current model kits and supplies. It has fast become "the source" for the model builder in this area. Meetings begin at 7 pm and usually last two hours. The meetings begin with a brief social period, followed by official club business. After business is concluded, the fun continues with demonstrations, which focus on specific aspects of scale modeling. Videos are often shown and new kit releases, building and painting techniques are discussed in depth. Industry news and gossip are always a topic of discussion as are coming events outside the club. For more information visit the NCWVSM website at www.ncwvsm.freesevers.com or contact Scott Owen at 304/842-7091 or by email at sameowen@msn.com