



# THE STYRENE SHEET

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## Gabriel Lee's Whiff or Wimp Out View !



Understanding the method and madness of "What-If?"

By: Gabriel Lee

"What-If?"- The concept sends shudders to some, amusement to others, and admiration to many. Some modelers see those that practice this methodology as "not serious" or "wasting money". Some see the models produced by this methodology as "uber cool". IPMS calls it "Hypothetical". Others call it "speculative modeling". Just, what is it? "What-If?" is a subset of the modeling universe, in which the only rule is that there are no rules. There are plenty of techniques. First, we should learn the vocabulary of "What-If?".

- "Whiff"- A "What-If?" type model or a future action as in to "whiff" or not to "whiff".
- "Whiffing"- Verb. When a model builder is building a "What-If?", it is called "whiffing".
- "Whiffer"- Noun. A model builder who concentrates on "whiffing" is called a "whiffer". (Cont'd pg 3)

*Editor's Ravings* – this month's editor, Mick Burton

Representative Republic. Return on Investment. Building Market Share and Maintaining Momentum with Brand Identity. Executive charter, Responsibility to Shareholds. Democratic Rule while balancing Citizen Freedoms vs Responsibilities.

What on earth could or does any of the preceding have to do with our hobby directly? Well, if you've ever been an officer of any or several clubs, or part of the team or "the one" responsible for making things happen over a span of significant time then you might have some good idea why and how those terms do embed directly. Many club members who've never had pleasure of these experiences (be it planning a year of club meetings, annual contest, club "funfest" or "serious promotion/community services") by choice or simply haven't thought to try it on, still have some concept or detail idea how these terms relate to us. Terms popularly ranked as only to do with political/governance or business frameworks in "the real world or society" that have direct relevance to our own hobby Society and associate organized bodies within.

Especially and namely when getting into the dull (to some) business of "running the club" or "putting on the big shows". Having been for many years part of and currently engaged actively within two local clubs with "the infrastructure" thusly knowing who is who and does what with, assists me in gaining perspective. Especially here, in seeing those few who don't always realize they don't see all the hows, whys, wherefores. So thusly go about freely offering influential opinions at times to the impediment of getting all this accomplished, while not offering any kind of personal investment (of time, money, thought) to those who do. To them, I offer my thanks for giving me the "edge" for an editorial rant here along with my reward to attempt to offer riposte without being too specific. The challenge of trying to offer up fun and fairly balanced entertainment, events and daily value for what's actually a social hobby organization partially subsidized by the few for the benefit for the all, *IS* interesting and rewarding. A thankless job, hard to communicate, with an always quite limited pool of interested participants? No, I sometimes may sound as if it's so, truly I just wish some would get more thoughtful and informed before they offer "free speech" is all. Thanks, vox ! - *mick fini*

### **SVSM EDITOR' s CONTEST THEME FEBRUARY 2011 " Doctor's Orders "**

Since this is my birthday month, your Editor often indulges in his convoluted contest whimsy at this annual passage. 2011 will be no different. As if to underscore anonymous MD opinions that I am indeed in need of a serious change of pastime or face lifelong tragic circumstances, I have crafted my latest competition to suit.

Eligible subjects include: ANY Finished McDonnell, Douglas, or McDonnell Douglas Aircraft. Or FW190D for "Dora" or TA152 series (both in honor of Dr Kurt Tank). For car guys, Dodge products (as in Mopar-Dodge if you missed the "MD" connect). Or any Porsche subject (see next for why) For armor fiends, any subject that can be tied to "Dr Porsche", as in "Porsche Turret Tiger" etc. For Real Space folk, Dr Werner Von Braun and his team offers a number of subjects from V-2 thru Redstone Arsenal works all the way to Saturn Five rocket.

Not to overlook also the huge number of potential subjects within framework of models that can be done using Coast Guard, Hospital Ship, Rescue Ambulance/Fire themes. Or Red Cross, another under looked useful area.

Others should not feel slighted, anything tied to "Dr Who" will fit right in to compete (Daleks may "eliminate") as well as "SuperCar" (thanks to "Dr Beeker"). Star Trek fans will be limited to only things and craft that can be directly associated with "Dr McCoy", which still leaves a wide range. Of course, as always, competitors should feel free to attempt to stretch, hornswoggle or otherwise fiendishly craft a credible or incredible premise to make it possible for their entry to qualify as a suitable "MD", as this is still an "in house contest" (Doctor's Orders!)

### **SVSM CLUB CONTEST THEME DECEMBER 2010 " Eat Pizza, Dude "**

This is simply the Editor's obtuse rejoinder to the logician's logic fetish, aka a wordy reminder of Xmas meeting Which again takes place at: Round Table Pizza, 4400 Stevens Creek Blvd, San Jose CA with a 7 PM launch. No Models (human or otherwise) will be turned away, but likely to be few as food, wild animals will be present. We remind you, you provide the food/drink, we will try to provide the entertainment/fun.

### **SVSM CLUB CONTEST THEME NOVEMBER 2010 " Just NAG, NAG, NAG "**

Eligible include: ANY Finished North American Aircraft or NA-Rockwell Corp subject, such as P-51 Mustang, F-86 Sabre, T-6/SNJ, for the more obscure, rarely built subjects. Of course FJ Fury series, AJ Savage, F-82 Twin Mustang, OV-10 Bronco, AGM-77A Hound Dog among other commonly seen NA items also can be entered. Grumman products such as the S-2, F4F, F-111B, Gulfhawk are eligible for the "G" portion of first NAG. Second NAG contest is any finished "real" Air Racer, honoring National AirRacing Group competitions. Third NAG is simply that, an annoying but well meaning reminder to at least consider making an entry.

*Mind Your W's and Q's with Gabriel Lee! (continued from page 1)*

- “JMN” - Stands for JOYLESS MODELING NAZI or JOYLESS MODELING NUMBY or JOYLESS MODELING NUMBNUT or JOYLESS MODELING NUMBSKULL- you get the drift. In standard IPMS parlance it is a person very similar to a “rivet counter”. Usually it is someone horribly allergic to “whiffing”, with an extremely limited modeling view of the universe. You probably know one. It is that modeler who looks dimly at anything that isn’t what they build and will let you know it- loudly. JMN baiting and JMN fooling is considered an added benefit to the “whiffer”. The joys of fooling a JMN into believing one’s whiff is or was real and having the JMN expound on the whiff are un-measurable. Getting a JMN angry by just looking at a whiff is almost as pleasurable.
- “PSR”- PUTTY, SAND, AND REPEAT. A concept well known to all model builders, more so to the “whiffer”. Reason being, is that the whiffer is usually trying to get parts that were not designed to work with each other to look like they were. Putty is essential in this context.

As with other aspects of model building, there are many other techniques, levels, and types of models. Most models tend to be ships, space ships, military vehicles, and aircraft. Curiously, very few choose to whiff autos, mainly because if one can whiff it, it becomes a “custom car” in a week or two. Let’s examine techniques:

- “Decal it differently”- Usually the “gateway drug” into “whiffing”. As the name implies, one puts on different markings on a model. If it is an aircraft, it could be the markings for a squadron that never operated said aircraft, or a pilot that never operated said aircraft, or a country that never operated said aircraft, etc. The concept also applies to any decalable vehicle. Sometimes this becomes not so much a “whiff” but a “will be”.
- “Paint it differently”- Very similar to “Decal it differently”. It can also be used in conjunction with “Decal it differently”. Again, as the name implies, one paints the vehicle differently. Possibly in a scheme that did not exist for the particular type or time period.
- “Build it differently”- Modify a vehicle by doing something different from the “normal” version of the model. For an example, suppose you have an F4U Corsair. You could turn it into a bi-plane. Or could give it a six bladed propeller. You could turn it into a turboprop. Or just give it different armament.
- “The kit bash”- Inevitably, everyone eventually ends up here in some form or another. As the name indicates, one picks and chooses parts from different kits, and somehow makes them work in a model. This involves a lot of PSR.
- “Scale-o-rama”- This involves using parts from different kits of different scales in order to create something that eventually starts to resemble something out of a Science-Fiction movie. In fact, this is how many of the classic movie vehicles were created for some of our favorite movies.

Any whiff will involve one or more, or for that matter all the above techniques. Again, one must remember that in whiffing, there are no rules. This does not necessarily mean that whiffing is just about putting two pieces of plastic together with their favorite glue or solvent- anyone could do that. As in mainstream IPMS modeling (just because one whiffs does not necessarily mean that one does not belong to IPMS. There are some well known modelers that are also whiffers), one shows mastery by the quality of one’s craftsmanship. “Recognized” whiffing masters show their mastery the same way it is done in the IPMS rules book - with quality construction, quality paint jobs, and quality decaling. A properly executed (plausible) whiff will fool even the most anal retentive JMN. A fooled JMN will speak at length about the subject (*Concluded on page 8*)

# IN THE STILL OF THE DESERT, ANOTHER A.V.G. WINNER !

## A Quick Look at Region 8's Regional Held November 6 2010 In Lancaster

The IPMS Antelope Valley Group (AVG) delivered another stunning party of competitive scale plastic for all. A very good turnout (over 270 entries!) in a wide variety and all of high quality, from all over California as well points beyond, vied for a tremendous number of cool awards. This year's theme " In The Still Of The Night " was quite an open challenge. Offering chance to win theme award with anything from a 1/48<sup>th</sup> F3D-2 SkyKnight in the allover black "night fighter scheme" to Batmobiles and other diverse entries. Of course, their signature " Best X-Plane " trophy was offered, this year going to a gent with a lovely 1/48<sup>th</sup> "Glamorous Glennis" XS-1.



Region 9 had some folks show up for the event, including friends from Fresno Scale Modelers as well as three of us with twin membership in SVSM and Fremont Hornets. Congratulations go to Mike Meek for his winning with "Mr Awesome" 1/72 scale Yak Air Racer. Somehow Mick Burton got a 3 awards from AVG as well. We all encourage EVERYONE to come on down and find out what fun is to be had, AVG's doing again next year!



On left, this 1/48<sup>th</sup> Ki-115 was "OOB" and just SO lovely work!

On right, it seemed to me "The HULK " wasn't too happy with his drink choices Oh well...



On left, these were the huge amount of Special Award trophies for the "BEST " in category

On right, show's only 2 X-planes! - mick *fini*



## UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR AS OF SVSM MEETING 11-19-10

**Friday, November 19 2010**

**IPMS/Silicon Valley Scale Modelers** monthly meeting, club contest theme “ Just NAG, NAG, NAG ”

**Saturday, December 4 2010**

**IPMS/Silver Wings** host their SilverCon 2010 at the Kerr Middle School, 8865 Elk Grove Blvd, Elk Grove CA.

**Friday, December 17 2010**

**IPMS/Silicon Valley Scale Modelers** monthly meeting, club contest theme “Eat Pizza, Dude” Location of meet is Round Table Pizza, 4400 Stevens Creek Blvd, San Jose CA 95129. Food is on you, fun is on us. Be there!

**Friday, January 14 2011**

**IPMS/Fremont Hornets** monthly meeting, night’s club theme “ One ” (as in M-1, A-1, Formula I, etc)

**Friday, February 18 2010**

**IPMS/Silicon Valley Scale Modelers** monthly meeting, club contest theme “ Doctor’s Orders ”

**Saturday, February 19 2011**

**IPMS/Santa Rosa and Friends** host “Hobby Expo 2011”, a huge show held in Petaluma Community Center, just off McDowell Boulevard in Petaluma, CA. This year’s show theme “Start to Finish”. The Model Contest is of course a large feature of the event. However every year the number, variety of hobby related displays, demos, and just plain cool things to see grows, this year promises to best yet. Also the signature “Speed Build” (what can you do in 60 minutes?) Make N’ Take, Huge Raffle that are Expo standards will of course be going on  
Contact John Admire at [admire@pacbell.net](mailto:admire@pacbell.net) or call him at 707-539-4563 for more information.

**Saturday, February 26 2011**

**NNL/West** present their 2011 Show at the Santa Clara Convention Center, Event themes “Replica and Firsts”  
Held also in same hall at same time, West Coast Model Expo! Admission is 15 dollars and covers all events.

**Saturday, March 5 2011**

**IPMS/Silicon Valley Scale Modelers** host their Kickoff Classic at the Santa Clara Convention Center, Hall “A”, 5001 Great America Pkwy, Santa Clara. Event theme “ Best of the Bay ”.

**Friday, March 11 2011**

**IPMS/Fremont Hornets** monthly meeting, night’s club theme “ March Madness ” (stay tuned for details here)

**Sunday, April 10 2011**

**IPMS/San Joaquin Valley Scale Modelers** host “Catfight 2011” at San Joaquin Valley Fairgrounds, Bldg #2 Stockton, CA. Event theme “Grumman Fighters, Wildcat to Tomcat”. Special Awards, Raffle, Lots of fun!  
BONUS! Same time, same locale! Stockton Model Car Show& Contest. So TWO chances to enter, win!

**Sunday, September 25 2011**

**IPMS/Fremont Hornets** host their returning Tri City Classic Seven” Exhibition and Contest. New Locale, now in Main Auditorium, Milpitas Community Center, 457 E. Calaveras Blvd, Milpitas. Event theme: " Black Rain " for anything Japanese or directly related. Special awards tied to theme, also for most creative or quirky entry.  
Also "Make 'n Take", raffle, vendors and day of event items TBA. Contest Director Woodrow Yeung, contact via email via Fremont Hornets Club, [daze61283@mypacks.net](mailto:daze61283@mypacks.net) or directly via [woodrow\\_yeung@yahoo.com](mailto:woodrow_yeung@yahoo.com)  
Check also website for more info or updates, address is <http://www.fremonthornets.org>

**October 2010 SVSM MEETING** Minutes were not available at time of publication

Instead, we'll have to get by with a recollection from my review of my few photos (of those that came out) from October for a taste of what Model Talk subjects were. Your editor hopes you'll make do with it, otherwise, become a minutes taker!

October's meeting included a number of business items, only significant ones that come to mind were discussions of the recent OrangeCon 2010 which was attended by Randy Ray, Woody Yeung and Mick Burton. Great show, lovely handmade wooden awards, LOTS of models to see. Which tied into the announcement of the return of the Fremont Hornets to contest circuit with their 2011 Tri City 7 event, flyers for it were passed out at OrgCon along with updated SVSM KOC2011 flyers.

Model Talk included Cliff Kranz's collection of latest finished works, including his "Sandy" V-2 of the USN. Cliff also had entries in the club contest, his T-34 with mine roller notably among them. Jim Lund's Saro Princess in 1/72, long ago made her appearance "in sheet" at a meeting. This time shown she's all done 'n pretty, Vacform voila eh Jim? Steve Travis had a sweet solution for his windshield problem on his Yellow Rod, a "for sale sign" strategically placed. Chris Bucholtz's "Prodigal Son" was dearly appreciated in 1/72. More so to this author was his display of what now is Burton's favorite # in Obscureco product line, namely the completed Skywarrior cockpit quad. Numerous other folk had some cool stuff on table, but I wasn't taking minutes so can't do them proper credit here, sorry. Mike Meek's "Hunt for Red October" Club Contest (for which the Editor supplied prize monies) featured a good turnout, the results are listed on page 9 of this issue. Model of the Month went deservedly to Greg Plummer's superb custom motorcycle with an interesting and "trick" paint finish.



Above, Chris B's Prodigal Son, so very fine



At center, Cliff Kranz secretly readying to push the launch button as we looked on...



At far right, Jim Lund swears he doesn't know who brought the Princess in to us...

Below, Steve Travis's '32 Rod for Sale





**CONGRATULATIONS  
FOR WINNING OCTOBER MODEL OF THE MONTH  
Greg Plummer**



### *Gabriel's Trumpeting his Gauntlet Concluded (from page 3)*

matter (which never existed outside of the modeler's twisted imagination) and the few "documents" that exist on the subject. The whiffer will just smile, remembering that phrase from the bard, "hoisted on his own petard".

Another factor involved in whiffing is the back story. It is that which makes the model in question "plausible". What is it? Why does it exist? How is it to be used? A plausible back story often aids in creation of the whiff. It also helps a lot in JMN baiting. Did the author mention that he enjoys JMN baiting? By the same token, there are whiffers that enjoy this aspect more than the actual building of the whiff - it is a suspension of belief (much like adults watching a magic trick as performed by a master illusionist) and possibly a better storyline than that found on SyFy channel (which admittedly is not saying much). This is also another venue for modelers to show their creativity. Whiffing is about exploring, researching new techniques, and having a sense of humor. There are whiffers that do build purely to have their model be the punchline to some joke they have created in their back story. Other times, it has to do with the modeler's fixation on something or another. On one of the better "whiffing" sites ([whatifmodelers.com](http://whatifmodelers.com)) one sees all sorts of fun fixations that the members of the site have: Rocky Horror Picture Show, Roman Empire, Forward Swept Wings, T-Tails, Oh Canada, Luft 46, etc. Again, it is all about the modeler's personal peculiar brand of madness- hopefully it will present a "good show" once the end results are achieved. It would seem that "whiffers" have re-discovered the lost art of "having fun" in our hobby. It has been this author's observation that there are plenty of modelers out there that take themselves and their chosen subject matter too seriously. While it is commendable to build a model to be as historically precise as is possible given the chosen scale, to limit one's own skills by not experimenting with new techniques, seems counter productive to the author. What can possibly be wrong with trying out new methods of building, painting, and decaling, in a universe where one suspends reality for a short while? It works in the movies, why not try it with our hobby? The whiff usually falls within the "Hypothetical" category in IPMS. Therefore it is possible (and has been done all across the US and UK and other places in the world) to compete- should one be inclined to do so. The author can name prominent internet modelers (those that have inhabit the sites that many modelers favor in the internet) that have developed their "Real World" subject techniques by building whiffs. They have also won local, regional, and national contests by not limiting their "universe" of techniques. Some have even competed at Santa Clara, and have won prizes. They have even competed in "nationals" and have won there too. Perhaps it has to do with an open mindset that allows them to recognize a useful technique once they see it. Said recognized technique can then be applied to other model subjects, more mainstream, as it were. As Bruce Lee elegantly stated in his book The Tao of Jeet Kune Do- "Learn all that is useful, discard that which is not."

Of course, there are critics about this entire subsection of model building. Some say: "This isn't serious model building since it isn't a real subject". Others will say: "Speculative modelers are just a bunch of clowns and losers". Usually said critics tend to be the JMN's. Precisely, what is a JMN? More often than not a modeler that will discard a certain model because there are 12 rivets on a certain panel instead of 11. They also know every possible variation to their particular vehicle of interest. The whiffer will say: "IT IS MY FREAKING MODEL!"

The author would say: "Try remembering why you got into the hobby- to have some fun and to take some pressure off your regular life". Often, this message is lost on the modeler who takes themselves too seriously. We forget that we got into the hobby to get rid of some stress that comes with everyday reality. Whiffers have rediscovered the lost art of "having fun" while model building. Speculative model building is the actual cure to AMS (Advanced Modelers' Syndrome- being the more "polite" explanation to the abbreviation, where model builders will go above and beyond in detailing whatever they "enjoy" building, regardless of scale and visual acuity of the admiring public). By building something that did not exist beyond the modeler's fevered imagination, one is not forced to super detail something that did not exist- unless one is inclined to do so anyway. Again, just because it came out of one's imagination does not mean one should be sloppy about building, painting, and decaling. Especially because at the end of the process, the modeler will be left with a unique model- one that no one else in the entire world (or universe for that matter) possesses. There are thousands (if not millions) of ME-109s sitting on modeler's shelves all over the world, there are more models of the FW-190 in the model builder's universe than real aircraft of the type were ever built, but the point is that your "whiff" is yours and yours alone. There are sites on the internet, such as [www.whatifmodelers.com](http://www.whatifmodelers.com) that just show whiffs. There are others such as "megalomaniacalscale" that also show whiffs (just that they don't like to admit it). It has been the author's observation that those complaining the loudest about the whiff on "megalomaniacalscale" can easily be identified as JMN's once one has met them in real life. Don't be a JMN, keep your imagination alive, and remember- IT IS MY FREAKING MODEL! --*Gabriel fini*

# "That Red Faced Sinking Feeling": October 2010 Club Contest

Your editor, realizing a viable field of contenders had indeed, came to play, left his money and ran away:



First Place for 1/35 scale Russki Sherman  
By Laramie Wright



Third Place for U-Boot Type 23, by Randy Ray



Second Place for 1/72 scale Finnish Fishbed, by Ron Wergin

Actually, I was intensely curious as to what those Judges came up with for the final tally, due I had to leave early. Very pleased to learn later that one of the winners was a model whose entry into monthly competition was due in part to my harassment of its builder. Congratulations to him on taking my \$ 10 !

My thanks again to all who participated in our little bit of Halloween fun, entirely worth the sacrifice of my wallet. Only wish I'd gotten us more pictures!

- Mick fini

NEXT MEETING:

**7:00 PM**

**FRIDAY**

**NOVEMBER 19**

**COMMUNITY ROOM**

**Milpitas Police Administration Building**

**1275 N. Milpitas Blvd**

**Milpitas, CA**

