



John Leyland's diorama entitled "This Force is Bound for Tokyo" received the Dana McCalip Best Miniature award and the F.K. Bemis Best of Show, which is determined by the judges. Images by Sam Parent

Nautical Review

Judges evaluate 48 scale ship models at this year's competition

By Scottie Dayton

Entries ran the gamut from birch bark canoes to midget submarines at the 42nd Annual Midwestern Model Ships & Boats Contest and Display. The Wisconsin Maritime Museum event attracted a total of 41 competitors from Wisconsin, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, and New York.

Judges Bob Filipowski, Coleman Seskind, and Ed Urbanczyk used a point system to evaluate the models based on their individual merits. Entries were separated into categories for scratch built, wood or plastic kits, operational, dioramas, and nautical crafts. Modelers were ranked as junior for those younger than 21, and novice, intermediate, and advanced for adults.

At Saturday night's banquet, contest co-chairs Kurt Van Dahm and Wendy Lutzke congratulated the winners of 18 gold, 11 silver, and six bronze plaques. Gold plaque recipients also qualified for nine special awards, and some received more than one. Such was the case for John Leyland of East Peoria, Ill., and Steve Wheeler of Racine, Wis. Leyland's diorama entitled "This Force is Bound for Tokyo" received the Dana McCalip Best Miniature award and the F.K. Bemis Best of Show, as determined by the judges.

On the morning of 13 April 1942, *USS Enterprise* (CV-6), flagship of Task Force 16 under the command of Vice Admiral William F. Halsey, joined forces with

another group of ships led by *USS Hornet* (CV-8). The men of Task Force 16 noted that the carrier had 16 U.S. Army B-25 Mitchell medium bombers on her flight deck. Later that afternoon, Halsey signaled to the two carriers, four cruisers, eight destroyers, and two oilers: "THIS FORCE IS BOUND FOR TOKYO." Spontaneous cheering broke out as sailors celebrated their first chance to avenge Pearl Harbor.

The 1:700 scale diorama depicts 17 April 1942, the day before the Doolittle Raid. *USS Cimarron* (AO-22) is refueling *Hornet* as light cruiser *USS Nashville* (CL-43) approaches to begin refueling. Leyland scratch-built the oiler with the exception of photoetched details and crew figures, cast metal boats, and 5 inch/38 caliber closed mounts. The bread-and-butter plastic hull has deckhouses, piping, winches, and other fittings fabricated from styrene.

Nashville began as a Corsair Armada resin kit of *USS Phoenix/Honolulu*. Leyland detailed it with numerous photoetched fittings, converted bridge levels, deckhouses, and equipment to depict the ship accurately, and lengthened the hull, which was 5/16 inch too short. "I cut it into sections under the 5 inch/25 caliber gun tub near the bridge wings and again at the 20mm tub near the aft superstructure," says Leyland. This hid the seams while preserving the correct relationship of the barbets and stacks."

Hornet, based on the HP Models resin kit, is heavily detailed with photoetched parts. The B-25s from Tamiya are positioned with no wings overhanging the starboard side to avoid damage during a potential refueling collision. "Another detail shows army and navy personnel using sheer legs to replace the repaired left engine of no. 15 aircraft," says Leyland. He also corrected the landing gear on Fujimi's F4F Wildcats.

The task group carried the Measure 12 Modified camouflage of Navy Blue, Ocean Gray, and Haze Grey. Leyland used White Ensign Model paints lightened for scale effect and sun bleaching. He simulated the ocean using Liquitex acrylic gel painted with Testors' enamels and coated with Pledge/Future floor wax.

Wheeler took home the Roger Jaekel Best Great Lakes award and the Modelers' Choice award for his 1 inch equals 1 foot (1:12) scale model of *Lady Isabel* (1907), a 42-foot raised deck cruiser. Built by Burger Boat Company, Manitowoc, the yacht won a Chicago to Mackinac powerboat race the year of her launch. After numerous owners, she was acquired by Burger Boat in 1987 and donated to the Wisconsin Maritime Museum three years later.

Burger and Manitowoc Marina personnel removed *Lady Isabel's* engine, tankage, and electrical system, but they didn't restore her 1907 configuration, which would have required a major rebuild of her front deck and cabin. As part of the museum's 2002 expansion, *Lady Isabel* was hoisted over the walls of the Wisconsin-Built Boat Gallery and lowered onto her permanent display dolly.

The scratch-built 42-inch-long model has 1/8-inch-thick plywood bulkheads planked with 0.080-inch-thick alder spaced 0.020 inches apart to replicate seams. Wheeler caulked them using Bondo scratch filler applied with a syringe and faired with microbrushes. He fiberglassed the interior hull to retard wood movement.

Wheeler used pear wood for the trim and pilothouse/cockpit details, but stained the maple cockpit sole to resemble teak. He airbrushed the model with Badger paints, using Salmon Buff to match the Interlux brand of Sundown Buff on the original's deck. Fittings were cast or machined, then plated.

"I applied a clear coat of Floquil F110015 Flat Finish to everything, because the solvent-based finish soaks into the wood like cyanoacrylate and effaces any glue stains,"

says Wheeler. "Acrylic clear coats don't work the same way." He mounted the model on a base covered with model railroad talus (gravel) to represent a boatyard scene.

Chuck Bauer's 29 foot equals 1 inch (1:350) scale replica of the aircraft-carrying cruiser *IJN Mogami* (1944) earned the North Oaks, Minn., resident the Badger Airbrush Best Paint Finish award, which included an airbrush, air compressor, and paints. *Mogami* saw major action in the Battle of Midway, the Battle of the Philippine Sea, and the Battle of Leyte Gulf, where she met her demise. During the night battle of 24 October 1944, U.S. surface forces damaged her severely, and U.S. aircraft forced the crew to abandon ship the next morning. *Mogami* was scuttled by a companion destroyer.

Bauer spent 1,011 hours building Tamiya's plastic kit. "I used 502 kit parts, then enhanced the model with 823 additional details fabricated from my inventory of photoetched metal frets," he says. He used tissue affixed with thinned white glue (polyvinyl acetate) to simulate canvas covers on selected boats or tarps on some of the 11 floatplanes. Bauer added



Steve Wheeler's 1 inch equals 1 foot (1:12) scale model of *Lady Isabel* (1907) received the Roger Jaekel Best Great Lakes award and the Modelers' Choice award. The commercial brass wheel is painted mahogany. Wheeler reduced the instrument panel's gauge faces from a photo of those on the original boat, and used drops of 5-minute epoxy to simulate glass covers. The turned and gimballed wood compass in a brass ring has a reduced copy of a compass card and simulated glass cover.

Images by Wheeler





Chuck Bauer's scale replica of the aircraft-carrying cruiser *IJN Mogami* (1944) earned the Badger Airbrush Best Paint Finish award, which included an airbrush, air compressor, and paints.

Images by Bauer

windshields, rudders, and railings on the motor launches, then opened cockpits, added metal propellers, folded wings, turned flaps and rudders, and mounted machine guns and aerials on select aircraft. "I suspended the port cutter from davits, and hung the Aichi 13A reconnaissance seaplane, or Jake, from the crane via a single attachment point," says Bauer. "The kit instructions showed attaching the parts with glue."

He shaded the hull to simulate oil canning, and used pin washes and pastels on the superstructures for depth and weathering. Besides custom color mixes for the hull and decks, Bauer applied three different Winsor & Newton Artists' oil color washes to the hull, aircraft canvases, and boat tarps, and used 52 commercial paints.

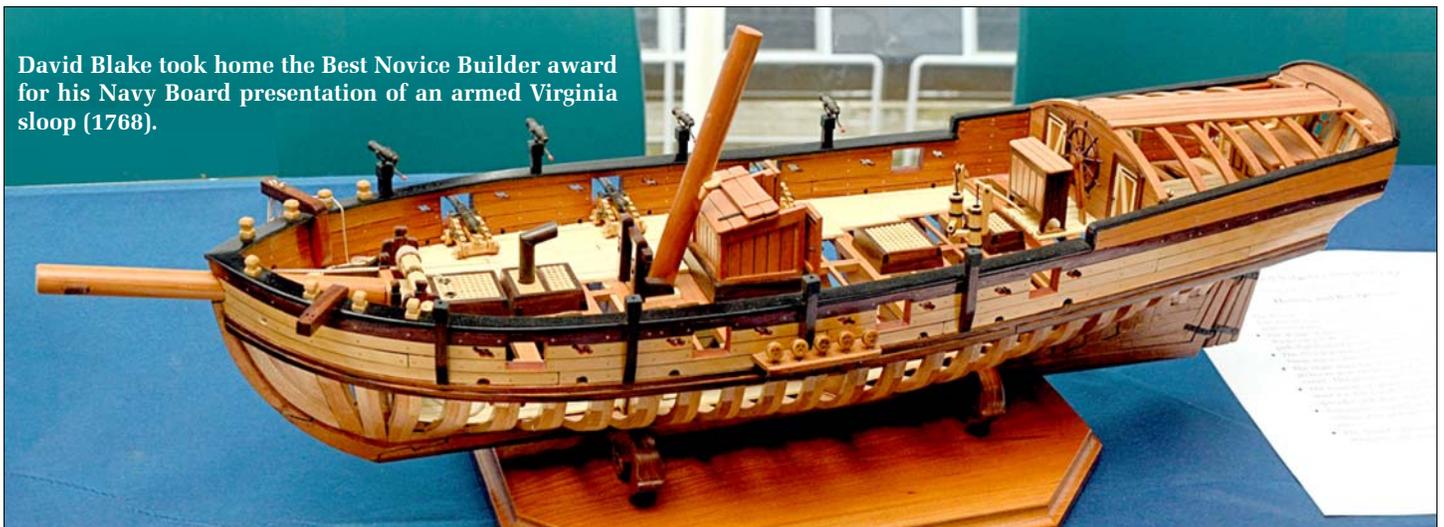
The Best Novice Builder award went to David Blake from Pewaukee, Wis., for his modified armed Virginia sloop (1768) at 3/8 inch equals 1 foot (1:32)



scale. Designed for speed and maneuverability, these vessels were favored by privateers, smugglers, and anyone who needed fast transport.

The Navy Board model began as a kit from Lauck Street Shipyard, but Blake replaced much of the wood with cherry, maple, Swiss pear, holly, red heart, boxwood, yellow heart, purple heart, and rosewood selected for their colors. Only the ship's wheel is painted, and the caprails and taffrail are stained black.

David Blake took home the Best Novice Builder award for his Navy Board presentation of an armed Virginia sloop (1768).





Bluenose, by Ken Goetz, won the Best Racing Class Sailboat award.

stack, hatch coamings, companionway, elm tree pumps, binnacle, swivel gun mounts, and cabin and compartment doors. “We were impressed by the level of craftsmanship and that a novice would attempt a Navy Board presentation, usually the realm of master modelers,” says Urbanczyk.

Ken Goetz from Franklin Park, Ill., won the Best Racing Class Sailboat award with his scratch-built 3/32 inch equals 1 foot (1:128) scale model of the Canadian fishing and racing schooner *Bluenose* (1921). *Bluenose* entered the record books by winning the first International Fisherman’s Trophy race, followed by many other races.

The plank-on-bulkhead model has basswood hull planking and cherry wood deck planking fastened with sharpened toothpicks duplicating treenails. Goetz built the deck furniture, bowsprit, masts, and booms,

but he purchased the blocks, cordage, and all dead-eyes except the upper oval ones, which he fabricated. “I made the sails from Clearprint drafting vellum 1000H and the Canadian flag from #20 bond paper,” he says. “The model, on a birch display base, is shown rigged for racing. All fishing gear has been removed and put into storage

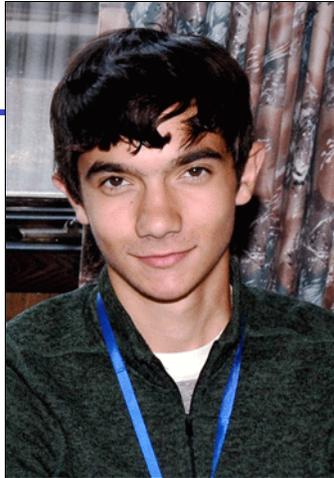
to make her as light as possible.”

After Blake scratch built the stern, he detailed the interior hull by placing cargo in the hold and adding a light room, magazine room with powder kegs, shot lockers, a ship’s stove, and coal scuttle. “Look closely and you can even see a framed window seat and two pictures on the walls of the great cabin,” he says.

Other fabricated fittings included catheads, knight-heads, windlass, galley

Junior

The apple didn’t fall far from the tree for award-winning ship-modelers Joe and Amy Simon of Jackson, Wis. Their children, Josh and Ellie, have plunged into the hobby.



In 2016, Ellie’s 1:700 scale model of the superliner *RMS Queen Elizabeth* won second place, junior category, in the IPMS/USA National Convention and Model Contest, and a gold at Manitowoc. She was 11 years old and the liner was her second model. A year later, Ellie’s 1:72 scale Mk.1 Sunderland seaplane won first place, junior, at the IPMS Nationals. She didn’t compete at Manitowoc then, but plans to return in 2019 with her 1:350 scale Japanese Antarctic icebreaker *Soya*.

Josh, 15, has built seven 1:700 scale World War II warships in the eight years he’s been modeling. As



Achievers

a junior competitor, the last three vessels in his Imperial Japanese Navy fleet won first place at the IPMS Nationals and gold at Manitowoc. Josh’s light aircraft carrier *IJN Chitose* also gar-

nered the IPMS Regional Best Junior award.

This year, his 1:350 scale guided missile frigate *USS Reuben James* (FFG-57) earned the Best Junior IPMS Nationals award. Although still eligible to compete as a junior, Josh chose the advanced category when he entered *Reuben James* at Manitowoc. It took a gold. “With a little coaching from Dad, I’m up to adding 30 to 40 percent aftermarket brass,” says Josh, who plans a career in engineering. “My next project is the 1:700 scale aircraft carrier *IJN Junyo*.” The *Junyo* and *Soya* kits were gifts from Joe.



LEFT: Gus Agustin's lion figurehead won the Gordon Stiller Best Maritime Carving award. **BELOW:** Bob Cioppa built a family heirloom and earned the People's Choice award with the schooner *J.H. Mead*.

by 2-inch-high block of orange wood. After using a benchtop scroll saw to rough out the basic shape, he completed the carving with a rotary tool and different high-speed steel micro cutters and burrs. "I use drills and burrs to pierce the carving, as deep holes in recesses enhance the figure's three-dimensional appearance," he says.

The figurehead comes with its own book on the subject. Agustin made the tome from 1/8-inch-thick plywood, duplicating the binding on the spine with cord. Using his computer, he printed the jacket's lettering on brown shipping paper, then glued the strips to the spine.

While most entries feature historical named ships, few modelers have a personal connection with their subject. This wasn't the case for Bob Cioppa from New Rochelle, New York. His wife's family genealogy revealed that her great-great-grandfather, Oscar E. Larsen, was a Great Lakes ship captain. From 1893 to 1911, he owned and sailed the three-masted schooner *J.H. Mead* out of Chicago, transporting lumber, corn, and barley throughout the Great Lakes.

Intrigued, Cioppa researched the vessel, then drafted plans in AutoCad based on photographs, wreck surveys, and the *Rules Relative to the Con-*

For the second consecutive year, the Gordon Stiller Best Maritime Carving award went to Gus Agustin of Arlington Heights, Ill., for his miniature lion figurehead with natural finish. The lion became the general British figurehead during Henry VIII's reign (1509-1547), but it was James I (1603-1625) who introduced the Scottish lion rampant with royal crown. Oliver Cromwell (1643-1658) eliminated the feline's crown, then Charles II (1660-1685) restored it.

Agustin made his lion figurehead from a 3/8- by 1-



struction of Lake Sail and Steam Vessels 1866.

Frames, deck beams, and keel were rough cut by laser from boxwood for the 3/16-inch equals 1-foot (1:64) scale plank-on-frame model. Cioppa fastened the boxwood hull planking and Bradford pear deck planks with bamboo pegs drawn through a drill indexing plate. He fabricated deck fittings, cabins, hatch covers, and pumps

from wood, copper, brass, or antique ivory. The linen sails are one-third their true height for the proper furled effect. Only the chains, cordage, and blocks were purchased.

“I built the model as a tool to show the ship’s construction for present and future family members,” says Cioppa. “Consequently, the model is unpainted and a portion of the hull planking has been omitted.”

When the ballots were tallied at the end of the show, the heirloom received the People’s Choice award.

The contest is supported by the Nautical Research and Model Ship Society of Chicago, Rocky Mountain Shipwrights, Midwest Model Shipwrights, Wisconsin Scale Boating Association, North Shore Deadeyes, Nautical Research Guild, River Bluffs Maritime Museum, Badger Air Brush, and the F.K. Bemis family.

The nation’s longest running museum-affiliated ship model competition returns on 17-19 May 2019. Follow the event at www.wisconsinmaritime.org or on Facebook.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Some of the nation’s finest shipmodelers include special award winners Robert Cioppa, Steve Wheeler, Chuck Bauer, John Leyland, David Blake, Ken Goetz, and Gus Agustin.