October 2020

Next Meeting:

Monday, October 12, 6:30 p.m. at The Smoketree Community Building, 11100 Smoketree Drive, Richmond, Va. IPMS Richmond celebrates another meeting, this month dominated by the ever popular "Show & Tell".



Halloween is not only a time of costumed Trick 'R' Treating children gathering, then gorging on candy, but adults decorating homes, partying in their own costumes, and watching not so scary "B" horror movies. Maybe all these, and more, will contribute to your fitful sleep, with nightmares populated by creatures like that pictured above. This is a large and well done large scale dinosaur, that competed in the IPMS Richmond sponsored 2020 Old Dominion Open.

visit IPMSRICHMOND.blogspot.com

SPARE PARTS LIST

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In November...

The November chapter meeting will feature Scott Holtz, presenting, and speaking of, real space modeling. Also, he will share his fascination with NASA's development of military rockets into space launch vehicles.

Important Message: Long time and active member, Tim Bowman, requires a ride to meetings. He lives at 2304 Parkwood Ave. Apt A. Richmond, Phone: 358-3237

Minutes of September 14 Chapter Meeting

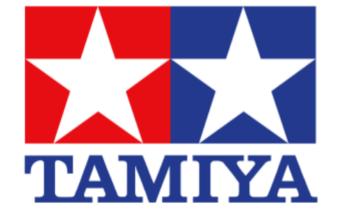
...E.L. Motley, Secretary

Chapter President Mike Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with 11 members present. With chapter elections tonight, Mike called for all ballots to be submitted. Following the collection of ballots from the members in attendance, these ballots were combined with the ballots previously received by e-mail and were duly counted by the chapter president and the secretary, both of whom were running for reelection unopposed. With the offices of president, secretary and treasurer being uncontested, Mike Lyons, E. L. Motley and Alex Valz will begin another term. Richard Leininger was elected as chapter vice-president.

Apart from the elections, other chapter business was conducted. President Mike announced that the Old Dominion Open committee is recommending that we cancel the 2021 ODO. A final decision has not been made, but the consensus among the committee members is that the decision cannot wait until November and should be made within the next several weeks. ODO Chairman Chris Bryan is requesting input from the chapter membership. There is still too much uncertainty as to what risk the Coronavirus will pose in February and what restrictions on public gatherings will still be in effect. Given the show's large number of vendors and guests, masks and social distancing would be impractical if not impossible. An early cancellation would save us money and permit us to plan for a bigger and better future ODO.

Mike announced that the lease on the chapter's storage shed has been renewed for another year. Smoketree is also giving us a credit for rent during...

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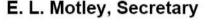
...the months we were unable to have "in person" meetings.

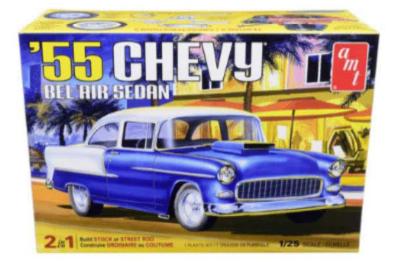
No financial report was presented. However, annual chapter dues (\$25.00) are now due and payable. Contact Treasurer Alex Valz if you have not yet paid your dues.

The decision on a theme for our December chapter contest (Monday, December 14) was discussed. The question of the theme was tabled at the August meeting. The contest theme will be "Your Birth Year." Build a model of something that was in use, service or existence during the year of your birth. For examples: a 1955 Chevy Bel Air, a Mercury space capsule, an F-86 or early MiG jet fighter, Pershing or Patton tank, etc. This does NOT mean the actual kit used must date from your birth year—just the subject matter. This will be a special category and award in the December contest. All of the usual categories and awards will still be in effect.

We have received generous donations of additional hobby supplies (including from Ammo of Mig) for our Fork Union Military Academy Model Club project. Our distribution plans are still on hold because of the school's Coronavirus situation and resulting changes to on campus activities.

With no additional business, the meeting continued as a "Build Night." Our next chapter meeting will be Monday, October 12, 6:30 PM at the Smoketree Community Center. Secretary's Notes: The IPMS Region 2 Convention has been rescheduled for June 18-19, 2021, at the Salem Civic Center, Salem, VA. For details, go to rvipms2020bravesites.com. Also, it has been my honor and privilege to serve as our chapter's secretary for the past three years. Thank you for your support, and I welcome your ideas on keeping IPMS Richmond fun and successful.







I have settled on an optimistic selection of two "Your Birth Year" theme entries, the AMT "55 Chevy Bel Air Sedan" (above left) & the vintage 1960's UPC 1/48 "A-4A Skyhawk", kit parts are for prototype/test aircraft with nose sensor probe and basic markings. ... Editor







In August, Major David Wallace of Fork Union Military Academy's Scale Model Club requested help from IPMS Richmond in obtaining model supplies (paint, brushes, glue, tools, etc.), reference books and hobby magazines for the cadets discovering model building. The membership of IPMS Richmond gladly approved obtaining these supplies for the FUMA club. Angel Garcia-Ablanque, the owner of **MicroWorld Games, LLC**, graciously agreed to source model paints and tools plus offered to discount the items. Angel then reached out to Squadron Shop who helped by reducing their price. He then reached out to Ammo by MIG. They went beyond giving a discount and donated "How to" books and a case of Ammo's Extra Thin cement.

IPMS-Richmond obtained Car Model paints and detail brushes. A collection of over 200 model books was donated along with various models and other materials.

The total retail value of the donation was over \$2,000.00. All this was done as we operated under Covid-19 requirements. Social distancing slowed our efforts but did not prevent this project from happening. On September 29 Angel and I delivered the supplies to a grateful Major Wallace.















IPMS Richmond Helps Fork Union Military Academy Scale Model Club w/Supplies

Angel Garcia-Ablanque, owner of MicroWorld Games, LLC, provided a large discount of the retail prices and also obtained a wonderful donation of items from Ammo by Mig Jimenez. The retail value next to each item totals over \$1,000.00. Angel drove from Lynchburg to Fork Union to deliver the donation.



						,		
VJ70107	17ml Bottle WWII German Model Color Paint Set (16 Colors)	1	\$ 52.95	SQ30506	Sanding Stick Set (5 Diff Grits)	8	\$ 9.98	
VJ70108	17ml Bottle Panzer Model Color Paint Set (8 Colors)	1	\$ 25.95	SQ10309	Cross Action Curved Tweezer	6	\$ 6.98	
VJ70201	17ml Bottle Utility WWII & WWIII Wargames Paint Set (8 Colors)	1	\$ 26.95	SQ10303	Fine Point Micro Tweezer	6	\$ 5.98	
VJ70202	17ml Bottle WWII Soviet Armour & Infantry Wargames Paint Set (6 Colors)	1	\$ 19.95	TR09900	Modeling Brush Set	8	\$ 18.99	
VJ70203	17ml Bottle WWII American Armour & Infantry Wargames Paint Set (6 Colors)	1	\$ 19.95	A.MIG-	MODELLING GUIDE: HOW TO PAINT WITH		\$	
VJ70204	17ml Bottle WWII British Armour & Infantry Wargames Paint Set (6 Colors)	1	\$ 19.95	6040	ACRYLICS ENGLISH THE WEATHERING		22.95	
VJ70207	17ml Bottle WII German Waffen SS Wargames Paint Set (6 Colors)	1	\$ 19.95	A.MIG- 6019	SPECIAL - HOW TO PAINT 1/72 MILITARY VEHICLES ENGLISH	1	\$ 16.50	
VJ70220	17ml Bottle WWIII American Armour & Infantry Wargames Paint Set (8 Colors)	1	\$ 26.95	A.MIG-	COMPLETE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF	1	\$	
VJ70221	17ml Bottle WWIII Soviet Armour & Infantry Wargames Paint Set (8 Colors)	1	\$ 26.95	6149	ARMOUR MODELLING TECHNIQUES - ENGLISH COMPLETE		230.00	
VJ70222	17ml Bottle WWIII British Armour & Infantry Wargames Paint Set (8 Colors)	1	\$ 26.95	A.MIG- 6049	ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AIRCRAFT MODELLING TECHNIQUES ENGLISH	1	\$ 230.00	
VJ70223	17ml Bottle WWIII NATO Armour & Infantry Wargames Paint Set (6 Colors)	1	\$ 19.95	A.MIG- 8156	EXTRA THIN CEMENT FULL DISPLAY (25 pcs.)	1	\$ 148.75	
VJ70224	17ml Bottle WWIII East German Armour & Infantry Wargames Paint Set (B	1	\$ 26.05	All the MIG items in Yellow were				

All the MIG items in Yellow were Donated at no charge.



Alex Valz's Accurate Miniatures 1/48 Grumman TBF/M Avenger, "Barbara III"





These three pictures are of George Bush's TBM Avenger "Barbara III" that I recently completed, with a Coastal Models printed section of a WWII era USN carrier deck. The 1/48 kit is from Accurate Miniatures and is one of the nicest airplane kits I've ever built. Paints used were Tamiya acrylics. The Accurate Miniatures' kit is a far cry from the junky Aurora, Monogram, and Lindbergh kits of my tube glue childhood. Look for it on display October 12 for Show & Tell.









Old Dominion Open Sponsors:





WASHINGTON SHIP MODEL SOCIETY

THE HISTORY BEHIND THE MODELS

TOUGH LITTLE KITTY: THE GRUMMAN F8F BEARCAT

By E. L. Motley

Neil Armstrong called it his favorite aircraft. One U.S. Navy pilot likened it to a Maserati, while another compared flying it to riding a Harley-Davidson. It was arguably the best World War II fighter plane never to see air to air combat. It was the last piston engine fighter produced by Grumman's legendary "Iron Works" and the last one ordered by the Navy. The plane was the F8F Bearcat, Grumman's final prop-driven "Cat."

The Bearcat's story began in mid-1943. By that time, victories at Midway and Guadalcanal had turned the tide of the Pacific war in America's favor. But the cost in men, ships and aircraft had been horrific, and everyone knew that much brutal fighting lay ahead. Although Hellcats and Corsairs were on the way, the Navy was very concerned that a new generation of Japanese fighters might be in the works. The A6M Zero had been a nasty surprise that the Navy still worried about a reprise of. Grumman proposed "Design G-58," a nimble dogfighter that was smaller and lighter than the Hellcat and Corsair. This new lightweight interceptor would have blazing speed, an outstanding rate of climb and would be unbeatable in the under 25,000 feet air combat environment.

The Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics (BuAer) liked Grumman's proposal and signed a contract with Grumman on November 27, 1943, for the XF8F-1. The first prototype flew on August 31, 1944. Impressed, the Navy ordered 2,023 F8F-1's on October 6, 1944. The F8F-1, which Grumman dubbed the "Bearcat," would supplement and ultimately replace the Hellcat.

"Hot rod" was an understatement for what rolled out of Grumman's Bethpage plant. The Pratt & Whitney R-2800 Double Wasp radial engine weighed 3,000 pounds while the airframe behind it was 4,000 pounds empty. The new Bearcat was literally half engine. In a typical carrier deck takeoff, the Bearcat needed only a 200 foot roll. At 17,000 feet, the Bearcat hit 426 mph. Given the wings' size, the armament was four .50 caliber wing-mounted machine guns instead of the preferred six. Later Bearcats would have heavier firepower when four 20 mm cannon replaced the machine guns. Internal fuel was also limited, although a large drop tank could be carried. Armor protected the...





Left: Grumman's XF8F-1 "Bearcat" clearly designated for testing and, Right: Howard Pardue's restored F8F-1, with non-standard spinner hub, parked prior to some exciting airshow flying.





the cockpit, engine and other vitals. A bubble canopy (the first on a USN fighter) and a humpbacked fuselage gave the pilot an excellent view.

There were teething troubles. Many naturally stemmed from mating a lightweight airframe with the monstrous R-2800 engine. A dorsal fillet extension of the vertical tail (and eventually a taller rudder) solved stability problems. The big maze of piping required for the engine (and crammed in ahead of the firewall) suffered from fuel leaks and seal failures. There were also hydraulic problems. Spark plug fouling was never fully resolved and remained an issue throughout the Bearcat's service career. The extra-long main landing gear required to accommodate the R-2800's upsized propeller also had some problems. But it was wartime and there was no luxury of a lengthy development period. Production began while Grumman continued to remedy mechanical and aerodynamic problems.

The biggest hurdle was the Bearcat's "breakaway" wingtips. For extra agility and to avoid the additional weight of a fully strengthened wing, Grumman used novel wingtips that would literally break off during extra high-g maneuvers. Enough would still remain of each wing to fly the Bearcat safely home. Despite a number of redesigns, the concept proved totally impractical. Unfortunately, there were several fatal accidents before Grumman ditched the breakaway wingtips and fitted reinforced wings.

There are several persistent myths regarding the F8F Bearcat's design and purpose. Some aviation writers have said the Bearcat was influenced by the Focke-Wulf Fw-190 or that the Bearcat was an American copy of the Fw-190. There is even an old story—totally false—that Grumman had and tested a captured Fw-190 at the Bethpage plant. The Bearcat and the Fw-190 were similar in size, layout and having very powerful radial engines. Both planes were deadly to face at 20,000 feet. However, there was no connection between the two aircraft. Grumman test pilots flew a captured Fw-190 in England in September, 1943, and another one in 1944 at the Navy's Patuxent River test facility. However, the Bearcat's design was largely finalized in July, 1943, well before anyone at Grumman laid hands on a Focke-Wulf.





Early Bearcat kits are Left: Hawk's (later by Testors) 1/48 F8F-2 with engraved panel lines, but spartan interior and Right: Hobbycraft's 1/48 F8F's, were issued with US Navy, French, & Blue Angels markings.





It has also been claimed that the Bearcat was built especially for use on the USN's escort carriers and Independence class light carriers. This myth makes more sense, but it wasn't the case. A fast and agile "Zero Killer" was always the design's priority. Nonetheless, the smaller and lighter Bearcats were a good fit for these ships. A number of the escort carriers were converted from merchant ships, and the nine Independence class flattops were originally Cleveland class light cruiser hulls. Some of the escort carriers had difficulty operating Hellcats and Corsairs while others were limited to carrying increasingly obsolete Wildcats.

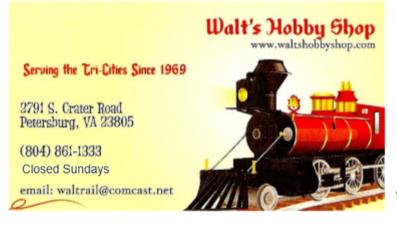
A final myth is that the Bearcat was developed to shoot down kamikazes. Granted, the F8F would have been ideally suited for this role, especially if the planned invasion of Japan had taken place. As with the Focke-Wulf story, the facts and timeline do not match up. Kamikaze attacks did not become a daily risk to Allied warships until the closing months of 1944. By that time, the Bearcat was past being designed and was well into flight testing.

Although Hellcats and Corsairs were decimating Japanese aircraft by early 1945, Bearcat production proceeded. The first Bearcat squadron (VF-19) was formed on May 21, 1945, and began training with the new fighter. Upon being declared ready for duty, VF-19 set sail aboard the light carrier USS Langley on August 2, 1945. News of Japan's surrender arrived while the carrier was at sea. With the war finally over and won, the Navy reduced Grumman's order to 770 aircraft. An additional 1,876 Bearcats to be built by General Motors were cancelled.

Too late to see action against the Japanese, the Bearcat became the Navy's most numerous fighter during the immediate postwar years. Engine and armament modifications and upgrades (20 mm cannon instead of .50 cals) kept the Bearcats potent. Bearcats could operate from any carrier (24 squadrons flew F8F's) and fighter jocks loved the plane. Some flew with the Marines. From 1946-1949, the Navy's Blue Angels flew F8F's. But the tough little cat's days were already numbered.









The Bearcat's slow demise began in 1946 when the Navy staged a mock dogfight between a P-80 Shooting Star and a Bearcat. It was no contest. Even with all the limitations the earliest jet fighters had, the P-80 flew rings around the Bearcat. The Shooting Star was faster, never gave the Bearcat a clear shot and could engage and disengage at will. Everyone then knew that the Navy's latest and hottest fighter would be just a stopgap until jets were ready for carrier use. Grumman delivered the last Bearcat in May, 1949. The production run totaled 1,263 aircraft spread over three major versions.

As the Bearcat's assembly line shut down, Grumman ramped up another one to build F-9F Panther jets. McDonnell's F-2H Banshee was also in production. Both jets steadily replaced Bearcats aboard carriers. Starting in 1949, Bearcats were increasingly handed down to Naval Reserve squadrons.

When war broke out in Korea, the Navy quickly decided not to commit Bearcats to the fight. Jets were obviously better suited to the fighter role, while "mud moving" Corsairs and Skyraiders were ideal for ground support. All-weather versions of the Bearcat's twin-engine Grumman cousin, the F7F Tigercat, flew night fighter and recon missions. Back stateside, the Navy retired the last frontline Bearcats in 1952. Reserve Bearcats were gone a year later.

The F8F would eventually see combat, but not in American markings or in its intended role. In 1946, France re-imposed colonial rule over Indochina. The Communist Viet-Minh were the most powerful of the pro-independence groups opposing the French and launched a guerilla war. Along with other military equipment, the U.S. provided the French with ex-USN F8F-1's and F8F-1B's which began arriving in Indochina in 1951.



Uniquely marked and equipped F8F-2's with one (1) 20mm cannon per wing. Wings are folded.



Well used Bearcats of the Auvergne squadron at Tan Son Nhut, in 1953.





These Bearcats were used as fighter-bombers and gave the French excellent service. Although not "bomb trucks" like Skyraiders or late-model Corsairs, the Bearcats could tote up to 1,600 pounds of bombs, rockets or napalm. They flew countless ground support missions and were very active in the defense of Dien Bien Phu. After the French withdrawal in 1954, they turned over some of these Bearcats to the South Vietnamese Air Force. The South Vietnamese flew these until American replacement with T-28's and Skyraiders. The U.S. also supplied Thailand with Bearcats which lasted well into the 1960's.

Not surprisingly, some Bearcats ended up having civilian lives. Grumman built two civil Bearcats ("Gulfhawks") for the Gulf Oil Company to use for promotional purposes. A number of retired and refurbished F8F's enjoyed success as racing planes and on the air show circuit.





THE F8F BEARCAT IN PLASTIC

Although model kits of the F8F Bearcat have been around since the 1960's, their availability and variety in 1/48 and 1/72 scales have been limited. The first widely produced injection molded Bearcat was Hawk's 1967 release of a 1/48 F8F-2 with USN markings. Hawk followed with a 1/48 "chrome plated" South Vietnamese fighter-bomber in 1968. The first Hawk kit returned in the 1980's and 1990's under the Testors and Italeri labels. It's obviously a 1960's kit. The "cockpit" is only a simple seat and primitive instrument panel—no floor, stick, side panels or other detailing. Panel lines are raised on the wings and recessed on the fuselage. The wheel wells are shallow and incorrect in detail. A very simple radial engine is also inaccurate. Still, despite its age and limitations, the Hawk/Testors/Italeri 1/48 kit can be built into a decent model of the F8F-2 (taller rudder and cannon armed version).





In 1998, Hobbycraft released a 1/48 Bearcat that could be built as either an F8F-1 or F8F-2. Like most Hobbycraft kits, there are issues with accuracy, detailing, fit and decals. Instead of enclosing a larger (and better quality) decal sheet, Hobbycraft released the same molding in four different boxes: a late 1940's U.S. Navy fighter (VF-151 and VF-29), a South Vietnamese fighter-bomber, an Indochina War French Air Force plane, and a Blue Angels mount.

By 2000, Academy had Hobbycraft's mold and re-released the kit with new decals for a South Vietnamese F8F-1 or a 1946 USN aircraft (VF-3). A 2004 re-release finally provided a comprehensive decal sheet for French (Indochina War) and U.S. Navy (VF-61, VF-82 and Blue Angels) aircraft. A 2016 re-issue featured decals for one of the U.S.S. Tarawa's Bearcats and several other USN examples. All of these reissues were as Academy kits.

Hobby Boss released the best detailed and most accurate 1/48 Bearcat kit in 2011 (an F8F-1) with decals for a VF-3 machine and the Navy's "Beetle Bomb" airplane. A 2012 (F8F-1B) 1/48 kit followed with parts and decals for Bearcats in the French and Thai air forces. The most recent Hobby Boss Bearcat kit is the F8F-2 released in 2013. This kit's decals are for VF-151 and VF-61. Modelers looking for the "best" 1/48 Bearcat or planning a contest entry should buy one of these Hobby Boss kits and check online for available aftermarket products. The current (October 2020) issue of Fine Scale Modeler features an excellent article on building the 1/48 Hawk and Hobby Boss Bearcats.

Surprisingly, 1/72 builders will find few Bearcats in that scale. In 1975, Frog released a 1/72 French F8-F1B, which later re-appeared under the Novo label in the early 1980's. Both boxings are now long gone. Monogram released a 1/72 Bearcat (apparently an F8F-1) in USN markings in 1967. That kit has been re-released at various times. In the 1970's, there were also two releases of the 1/72 Bearcat and a P-51B as a combo air racing set. The last Monogram reissue was in 1991 with decals for French and Thai Bearcats. In 1996, Hasegawa released the 1/72 Monogram molding as a Blue Angels F8F-1 or the yellow "Beetle Bomb" that performed with the Blue Angels. There was also a separate Hasegawa boxing with USN decals. The Monogram 1/72 Bearcat's last appearance was in 2010 under Revell's label with Marines decals.

rog 1:72

Grumman F8F-1B Bearcat Naval Fighter







Over the years, there have also been 1/48 and 1/72 vacuform, resin and limited run releases (e.g. Combat Models & ID Models, Great Plains Models and Sword). Again, those wanting to build a more accurate or detailed Bearcat should check online for available aftermarket products. Excellent kit reviews and builds are also readily available online at hobby websites such as

Cyberscale and Modeling Madness.





The 1/32 scale builders haven't been left out, either. Trumpeter offers 1/32 scale kits of all three Bearcat versions, the F8F-1, F8F-1B and F8F-2. These kits are also wise choices for modelers seeking quality and excellent detailing. These Trumpeter kits provide a good basis for

contest entries, too.

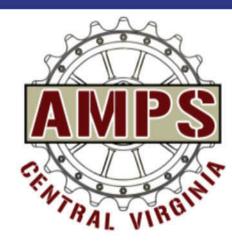




I inserted this Hobby Boss 1/48 F8F-1B cannon armed "Bearcat" kit image because I think he really likes those colorful French markings...



Protecting The Past For The Future





TOUGH LITTLE KITTY: THE GRUMMAN F8F BEARCAT, A STUDY...



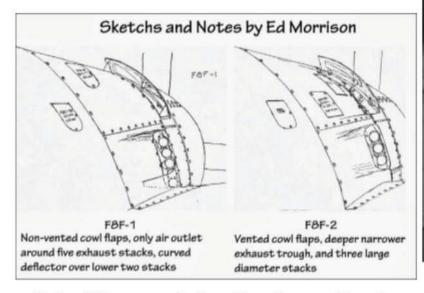


Like the aircraft exterior, all gear door interior surfaces are painted Glossy Sea Blue, as well as landing gear.



Brute speed resulting from "big engine in a small aircraft" is obvious, even at this angle.





Note differences in location & quantity of exhaust stacks on -1 & -2 F8F's.



Although this is a B&W photo, Interior Green is clearly shown on interior canopy frame, seat, & deck. Black paint has been applied on the cockpit sides.

IPMS Richmond Chapter Information

The Richmond Chapter of the International Plastic Modelers Society was established in 1972 by five area scale modelers. Combining great talent and passion for scale modeling, they created IPMS Richmond, with the expressed hope of spreading their enthusiasm for modeling to others in Central Virginia, and beyond.

Chapter members and guests meet the second Monday of each month, sharing their latest projects during "Show 'n Tell", developing improved modeling techniques while enjoying award winning members' demonstrations and special quest speakers. Members organize trips to public events that focus on scale modeling, competition, and history. Quarterly, our members gather just to build models as a group, and to enjoy each other's modeling, in-progress.

IPMS Richmond hosts the Mid-Atlantic's largest annual one-day scale modeling event, the Old Dominion Open model show and contest, which attracts a thousand, and more, to fellowship, compete, shop vendors offering the latest and vintage hobby products, and to be amazed at the over 1,000 completed scale models on display.

IPMS USA membership is incouraged, but not required. Chapter annual membership fee: \$25 (& special discount family membership fee). IPMS Richmond is governed by its constitution and by-laws, administered by annually elected officers. We share your love for scale modeling, no matter the subject, and we invite you to join us.

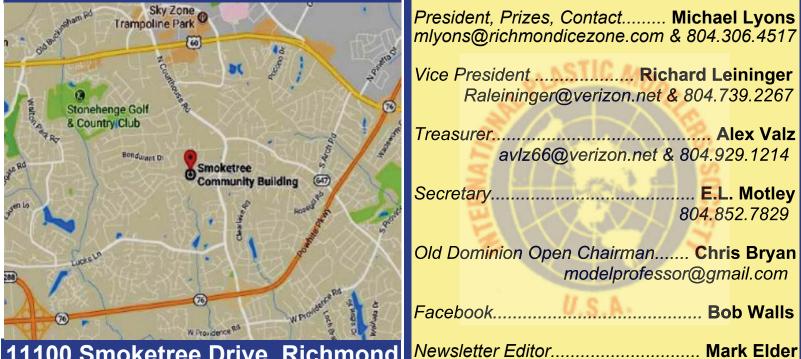
visit IPMSRICHMOND.blogspot.com







Venue: Smoketree Community Building



100 Smoketree Drive, Richmond

Chapter Officers

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