

The Antelope Valley group, IPMS AVG:



The Antelope Valley Group (AVG) title originates from the western Mojave Desert region where most of the club members reside. This region consists of Boron, California City, Mojave, Tehachapi, North Edwards, Edwards Air Force Base, Rosamond, Lancaster, Palmdale, Ridgecrest and Apple Valley. AVG got its start in the early 1990's by a small group of modelers who were originally meeting at various locations throughout Palmdale, Lancaster, and Edwards AFB. Eventually, the clan grew enough in size to seriously consider forming a new Chapter of IPMS Region 8. IPMS AVG is a unique melting pot where quite a few members are from aerospace, associated with the USAF, NASA, and major defense contractors.

In January of 1996, the Antelope Valley Group officially became "IPMS AVG." Membership has grown steadily over the years despite those that have moved out of the area. We've been able to maintain a consistent membership of approximately 20 to 25. AVG has never been a large club by any measure, but maintains a core of quality and dedicated members. Although aviation subject matter is a predominate strength of the club, armor, sci-fi, auto and ships also prevail as interests. AVG has a well balanced medium in all categories of model building. Most modelers actively retain AVG club and IPMS membership, directly contributing to the success of Region 8 and IPMS. In 2009, AVG recruited 7 new members to the clan. They have already made an impact to the club participating and placing in regional contests, taking up key positions in the AVG contest and running for club office.

After the newly elected club officers took posts in the Spring of 2009, a club survey was used to generate new ideas and help promote general club interest. The majority of the members are motivated to be a part of the club to develop skills and share with others and their works. All are willing to meet the club's needs for participation and most believe the club should be involved in the community. AVG has set itself apart from "just



another modeling club" with an active community involvement. Local schools, library, and the City of Lancaster have benefited from AVG's continued support. AVG teamed up with the Rosamond Library staff to host a library make-and-take. The library has enjoyed the AVG's promotion of modeling to the young enthusiasts and the club has mutually benefitted from the venue being the monthly club meeting location as well. The club has increased this event to twice a year with the make-and-take events planned in the Fall and Spring.

Another community youth involvement spin-off was started by one of our AVG members serving and supporting the Edwards Air Force Base Youth Center. Armed by the Air Force and supported by AVG kit donations, TSgt Tony Accurso has been donating his time weekly to bring a novice group of modelers to more advance skills of gluing and painting. He hasn't stopped at plastic modeling but has expanded his kids' exposure to model rocketry and to his remote control aircraft interest as well.

By far the club's major contribution and highlight of the year was becoming involved with a beloved WWII veteran, 'Adie' Adolph Michael Fix, former B-17 waist gunner. AVG came across Adie at a salute to the veteran's ceremony in Lancaster. Adie mentioned how he would like a B-17 model to show the kids when he frequently made special school appearances. So AVG decided to do a unique club build and presentation of the Monogram B-17.



September's club meeting was graced with the attendance of Adie who arrived with lots of photos, personal military records, and of course stories from his time in WWII. Our most favorite of which included a description of how his B-17 and squadron was among the first attacked and damaged by Me-262's and had to make a forced landing in Belgium. What better research for a project than from the source himself. This was a unique club undertaking in just two months time. We used a "systems engineering" approach to parcel out subassemblies and then pull it all together as a cohesive build which gave some of our members who haven't touched a model in a while some completion satisfaction. The club then made a special presentation at AVG's Desert Classic XII contest in November. There we presented our group effort B-17G model of "Fuddy Duddy," one of the aircraft that Adie crewed. Adie was very pleased and was the highlight of the contest. He once again shared his scrap books and was surrounded by enthusiasts and stayed until the end of awards. He said he wants to keep the plane at his house for a while but will probably donate it to the Lancaster High School's history teacher when they can put it in a display case.

B-17 Credits:

Mike Brignola - fuselage and final details
Rick Reinert – decals
Rich Ribaudo – guns, engines, props,
gear, details

Curt Stidham - wings, paint, placard
Matt Graham – Fuddy Duddy decals, base
Henry Blecha – bomb cart
Jim Abercromby - figures

In 2009, AVG celebrated its thirteenth consecutive Desert Classic Contest. AVG was selected to host the Region 8 “Regional” contest back to back in 2006 and 2007 and host the 2010 regional as well. Even with a small member base, nearly every member contributes to make each Region 8 Regional a success. The club takes pride in presenting some of the highest quality awards and promoting outside club participation in judging at all events. Also, in a bit of a surprise development, the AVG was presented with the Chapter of the Year award by IPMS Region 8 Coordinator Jim Woody at our contest. Each one of us deserves a part of the congratulations.



One of our Junior category award winners sporting her AVG trophies

The club continues to build a reputation of consistent and fair judging. Participants come as far as Milpitas to Las Vegas to Phoenix and to San Diego; many citing the quality of awards and judging for their returning interest. The club continues to promote and participate in most other regional IPMS contests, taking home the trophies as well. For example at Pasadena’s contest:



Tom Hamel 1st place WWII Armor,
M18 Hellcat\
Nick Kiriokos 2nd place 1/72 prop,
Me-109
Mike Brignola 3rd place for 2 JU-88
German Bombers

Club meetings are held every third Saturday (barring any local IPMS or Air show event) at the Rosamond library. The typical format for the four hour get-together usually starts off with club business, followed by demonstrations from vacu-forming to resin casting and then the highlight of the meeting with a show and tell of current member projects. Various club members present well-balanced reviews of recent kits and accessories in detail. Annually, the club holds a model swap meet where every member is encouraged to bring kits to sell or trade. Club business, member projects, coming events, and business are announced in a monthly club Newsletter. In March, a club "field trip" to the March ARB Museum was substituted for our normal meeting.



A few of the AVG faithful surveying museum grounds. Notice Valdez in the far right, in his element behind the forbidden rope zone!

The Edwards AFB Flight Test Center Museum exhibits the history of the air base and the people who were a part of this aviation proving ground. The museum is another one of the club's contributions to community and education. Inside the museum there is a unique "First Flights Wall" that chronologically depicts the order of first flight aircraft from Edwards AFB. Of the 88 plus 72nd scale models on the wall, AVG members built more than 90% percent of the displays. In addition to providing models for the museum, AVG also assists each year during the Edwards AFB open house events at the museum display. Some members are also heavily involved in the restoration of real aircraft on display. In 2009, Dave Newman added additional models to the First Flights Wall.



IPMS AVG has maintained its membership throughout the years, which is quite a feat considering the transient members from the active duty military and other rotational career fields. Even so, there is always a steady attendance at every meeting, making just about everyone a core member. The community volunteer time and dedication from this group in one of the most active and progressive chapters in Region 8. You can define its success but what it gives back as a benefit to the local community and the continued support of the aviation history of

Edwards Air Force Base. If you would like to be a part of a club that is active and enjoys the hobby of plastic modeling, come join us.

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http://www.proland.com/antelope_valley.asp

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