

The Assembler



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1 Meeting Themes

09-21-18: Operation Husky: The WW2 Invasion of Italy

10-19-18: Orange you glad it's October? Anything Orange or Black

11-16-18: Thanksgiving; which model do you give thanks for?

Location: The Church

Meeting Time: 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM

Cover Image: AMT 1972 Chevy Blazer by Ed Wahl

2 Bill's Banter

Non-Banter edition; blah, blah, blah!

It's going to be Fall this weekend. Have you started this year's build? If the answer is no, then quit reading this and get to work. I mean come on, it's been nine months already!

Sheesh.

Not Bill



EPOXYMORON

3 News

August Raffle Winners:

No raffle was held

Must Build Models 2018:

Max Bryant

Sam Buonadonna 1/35 Italeri PT Boat

Steve Butt 1/48 Eduard F6F-5 Hellcat

Bob Ford 1/35 Amusing Hobby VK201(K)

Bill Hunoway 1/48 Airfix TSR.2

Don Klein 1/32 HK Models Do-335

Ken Kwilinski Earth vs the Spider

Ed Mate 1/48 Italeri H-21C Shawnee

Jeremy Petersen Open Hawker Hobbies

Ken Scott 1/72 Trumpeter J-31 Gyrfalcon

Dave Stukel

John Truby

Mike Valentine 1/35 Club Build Jeep

Ed Wahl 1/48 Hasegawa TF-104

IPMS/USA News:

IPMS USA membership dues are: \$30 Adult 1 Yr., \$58 Adult 2 yr., \$86 Adult 3 Yr.

The IPMS/Region 5 web site is:

<http://ipms-gateway.com/Region5coordinator.html>

Any IPMS/USA member who recruits a new member will receive a two journal membership extension up to two full years.

IPMS Gallery Photos: Contact gALLERY@IPMSUSA.ORG to post photos of your models on the web site.

4 Feature

Modeling Notes for AMT 1972 Chevrolet Blazer “Feathers Edition”

By Ed Wahl

Back in the day, I wanted to buy a full-size Chevrolet Blazer because I loved the design of the body and the different utility purposes it could be used for. There were several reasons I did not go through with this purchase, including owning a 1968 Pontiac GTO convertible and a 1965 Ford GT-40. Also, I acquired a wife and four step-kids that year. If those reasons were not powerful enough, I noticed that Chevy trucks (and their GMC cousins) of recent vintage quickly exhibited rust-through on the rocker panels, lower door edges, and fender well edges.

AMT came to my rescue with a 1/25 scale kit of the Chevy Blazer (and GMC Jimmy). The Chevy kit has been reissued in several boxes over the years, most recently going back to the first issue's Crew Chief artwork. Chevrolet offered the 1972 Blazer in a special “Feathers Edition” with the wildly colored custom body, hood, and top markings as a factory option. The decal sheet in the AMT kit captures the factory markings very well. I liked the yellow body color with the colored feathers, but I believe the feathers could also be ordered with a white or black body among other choices.

Rather than go back to one of the earlier kits in my collection, I picked up a new one from HobbyTown because they had several on the shelf at the time. I wanted a showroom stock Blazer and an out-of-the-box build. After I opened the box and started on the kit, the scope of the build expanded and is not yet quite finished. I'll explain more about this later.

As with most car kits, I began with the stock Chevy 350 cu. in. V-8 engine using only the standard components. There were 23 parts just for the engine, manual transmission, and 4-wheel drive transfer case. The only piece omitted from the engine is the bracket that holds the Delcotron alternator onto the engine block, which floats in place by the rubber belts only. Another omitted part is the lower radiator hose, but that is only noticed if you look under the engine. Chevrolet Engine

Red from Model Master was the basic color. As an OOTB build, I skipped all the wiring and plumbing that could have been added.

Another choice was stock tires and chrome wheels instead of chrome reverse deep wheels and off-road tires. A little black wash into the recesses and joints on the wheels brought out a multi-piece look to the wheel assembly. Sanding the tire tread removed the shine of plastic tires to look used.

The frame was a single piece which, fortunately, was straight and not twisted. To the frame the assembled engine had to be mounted first. With some experimenting and dry-fitting, I identified the mounting points for a correct and level engine. Pre-painting the black frame was necessary before the engine or any suspension parts could be added. The left side exhaust pipe and muffler/tailpipe had to be added next. Then the exhaust pipe crossover from the right side to the left side exhaust pipe had to be joined mid-air with no locator pin, and the part fit perfectly. The front driveshaft from the transfer case was about 1/16th inch short when connecting it to the front axle assembly, but a small drop of tube glue on each end closed the small gaps. The springs and axle assemblies fit properly into their notches on the frame and lined up square with the frame rails. I used the two metal axle rods through the front and rear axle housings as alignment tools to (hopefully) result in all four tires touching a level surface later on. The front and rear shock absorber pieces fit into the holes and recesses provided, but the task of aligning each was tricky. There is a steering box piece from the frame to left front spindle that did not fit the angles and spaces that needed to be crossed, so I glued the piece to the frame only. After all this, I added the wheels and tires. They (all 4) touched the ground together...whew! As an aside, the inner wheel pieces were supposed to accept the metal rods in pre-drilled holes. Those holes were engineered for smaller diameter wire rods in earlier issues, so I had to drill out the holes for this reissue's larger rods to fit. Forcing the large rod into the small hole would have split the plastic parts and most likely damage the assembled frame during the rough handling.



The interior tub required some research and working time to deal with all the separate details in a stock 1972 Blazer. Some of the surfaces had to be painted body color yellow. Gloss black was needed for the seats, center console, and interior side trim. Flat black was used for carpeted surfaces. Finally, I had decided to build a Blazer tow vehicle for a trailer carrying a 1964 Chevrolet Impala show street rod, so I had to include a few extra details from the off-road version of the Blazer kit, including two extra chrome fuel tanks and the full-size spare tire on its floor bracket in the cargo area behind the middle seat. The dashboard was not to my liking because of the lack of instrument details and no decals for the gauges, so I painted them as best I could to look passable. The engraved details on the steering wheel were good, but there was no lever for the turn signals. I used Bare Metal Foil for covering the door handles, window cranks, and bright trim. Many hours of masking were required to paint all of the different surfaces.



Moving on, the removable hardtop was a small project in itself. The main top piece was warped slightly with a twist. While this did not affect adding the side windows with Testors clear parts cement, it was obvious that the twist could not be corrected without using super glue to mate the lower edges of the top along the top edges of the body. That step was held off to much later in the build. After painting the vinyl top white and covering with Future, I added the feathers decals first to the top and then to the installed windows. The rear window frame attached to the top with two hinge pieces so that the rear window panel could be opened. This frame was the poorest fitting piece in the entire kit, and I did what I could to locate it properly in the opening. There is no handle provided in the kit to open this upper hatch from the outside.



I started the body. I used Tamiya Fine White Primer followed by Model Master flat yellow and covered again by gloss yellow (same shade of yellow for both). Running along the lower half on each side is a wide trim strip, which I covered with Bare Metal Foil. Likewise, there is a wider trim panel across the tailgate, which includes "CHEVROLET" in widely spaced letters. I used Vallejo Chocolate Brown to brush paint into the wide center portions of each strip. Any slop along the edges of the strips was easily removed with a pointed wooden toothpick. The toothpick scrapes the soft paint off the foil without doing any damage to the foil. Paint was then cleared off the letters on the tailgate. Using a very fine pointed brush and thinned Vallejo black paint, I carefully added upper and lower pinstripes onto the trim panels and tailgate. Once again, the pointed toothpick was invaluable in cleaning off excess paint to leave only crisp black lines on the foil.

I covered the front and rear side marker lights with BMF, and painted clear red and orange/yellow glass stain (from sun catchers) into the recesses for the light lenses. The tail lights also required BMF trim, but the locations and shapes were not molded in place, so I had to freehand them. The front grille was painted with Vallejo flat black in the recesses, and a little blue and black took care of the Chevy emblem.

The red and clear tail light pieces were a problem. The holes molded into the back of the body for these pieces are too deep for the kit's provided lens pieces. The lenses are supposed to mount flush with the exterior body surfaces and chrome trim. I had to make spacers for the red and clear pieces to keep them from disappearing into the holes. This worked out quite well considering the time needed to take correct measurements and to cut and shape the spacers to fit into the holes.

Final assembly required five hands because of the movable tailgate flopping open time and again during the process of cementing the body to the frame. I knew the frame was square, so I began by cementing the lower edge of the front radiator wall to the top of the

frame rails, keeping this front area in alignment. The rear of the body sides had to be cemented to the vertical back edges of the interior tub, which in turn was square with the rear frame. By dealing with each side separately, I was able to take the warp out of the body while trapping the tailgate piece on its hinge pins in a centered position. Unfortunately, the tailgate was not quite wide enough for a snug fit to keep it in the closed position by itself, and it wanted to swing open and down. I reluctantly added some liquid cement to keep it closed. The rear bumper helped to strengthen the body assembly. The grille and front bumper fit perfectly.



Before mounting the body to the frame rails, I took a deep breath and added the feathers decals to the sides and hood. There were a couple of fractures in the large decals, but I was able to get everything in place so the cracks would not show. When the decals were dry and set, I carefully applied a coat of model car wax to the paint and decals to help seal everything. The polished wax slightly deepened the hue of the yellow paint, which I liked.



Final assembly required some planning because I needed to cut into the feathers decals to apply the external parts. The tiny "K/5 Blazer" side emblems for the front fenders behind the wheel opening are separate pieces on the chrome tree. They are very small and much too thick. I thinned the pieces and carefully scraped off the chrome plating on the flat surfaces to leave only the chrome lettering. I had to paint

the flat surfaces with a red color to match the feathers red stripe where the trim piece would be mounted. Very carefully I measured where each emblem piece would go and cut a small patch of decal off. Further, I had to scrape through the layers of paint down to bare plastic so the glue (a tiny speck of tube glue) would bond the emblem to the body. How can such tiny parts be so challenging to work with?

There were no kit outside mirrors, but I needed outrigger towing mirrors for each side of the Blazer. I found these mirrors in the kit from which came the trailer. Some time ago I built an MPC 1973 Chevrolet Caprice Classic, and in the kit box was a bonus car transport trailer with all the hitch components and outrigger mirrors for the tow vehicle. [Sidebar note: This trailer first seems to have been included with the 1966 MPC kit of the Mako Shark. In 1968, the trailer bonus began appearing in the annual full size MPC Chevrolet kits each year through 1976. There are a lot of these trailers out there that have never been built.] The track width of the trailer was a little narrow for the wheelbase on my intended street rod, so I cut off the connector strips and widened the track about 1/16th inch to result in a perfect fit. I also replaced the white stripe tires with black wall tires from my spares box. The U-Haul decals were 45 years old from the 1973 Caprice sheet, and they worked perfectly. Painting the orange color on all sides of the trailer was another exercise in masking. I used Metalizer Steel for the tire tracks and white for the fenders. I had to adapt some red AMT lenses to fit into the tail light sockets because MPC did not provide them. I made a license plate bracket to keep it legal. The kit needs safety chains and an electrical cable. The tow bracket assembly under the Blazer required some surgery to fit the frame of the Blazer.



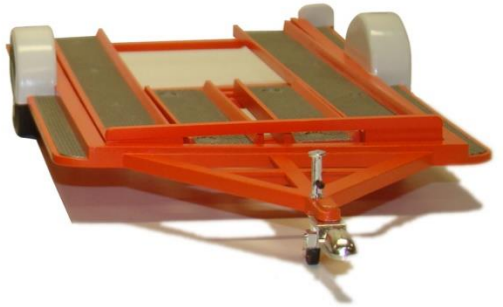
It was time to mount the all-weather hardtop roof. I first attached the right side of the roof to the Blazer's body. There was still a slight twist, and it was a tad wide. I let the super glue on the right side set up before I twisted and squeezed the top to get the left side to line up with the body. I then just held it all in place with my fingers for fifteen minutes before letting go, hoping the super glue would hold. It did!

The added benefit of correcting the twists in the body and hardtop was to bring the front edge of the top down onto the top of the front windshield frame. I had no courage to add any kind of glue into this complex area, knowing I would only get some unwanted glue to run onto the paint or clear windshield.



The outrigger towing mirrors were the last pieces added to the Blazer's body. First I had to determine the locations of the three-point attachments. One was in the middle of a colored feather, so I had to be extra careful to remove just a sliver of the decal and paint layers beneath to find bare plastic. The second one was directly above but only required scraping through some paint. The third point was on the end of a tripod piece that was to be glued to the back of the mirror and to the door. I really took my time with these tripod mounting pieces because they were the last ones to go onto the model. I did not want to mess up now. Thankfully, I did not mess this up. It was finished!

In retrospect, I thank AMT for reissuing this old kit. I liked the decal markings very much, giving me a model that is both colorful and challenging. The engraving of the tooled leather patterns on the seats and interior side walls is excellent. In fact, I found this kit more complex than most car models I have built. The original design and engineering was brilliant, with very little confusion left to the builder for parts locations if reading the instructions and dry-fitting first before adding glue is a followed practice. If I were to build this kit again, I will definitely choose the 1972 GMC Jimmy version with the bonus trail bike on the tailgate.



5 July & August 2018 Meet Models



747 by Dave Stukel



Blue Thunder by Rich Diaz



Super Girl by Ken Kwilinski



U.S.A.F. Rescue Boat by Dave Stukel



Submarine by Dave Stukel



P-47Ds by Ed Mate



Mitsubishi Zero by Rich Diaz