

100 NEW MODEL BUILDING IDEAS

IND

# model car *Science*

MAY 1965

35¢

**BEGINNING  
'65's BIGGEST  
CONTEST**

Wiring  
Engines  
for  
Super  
Detail

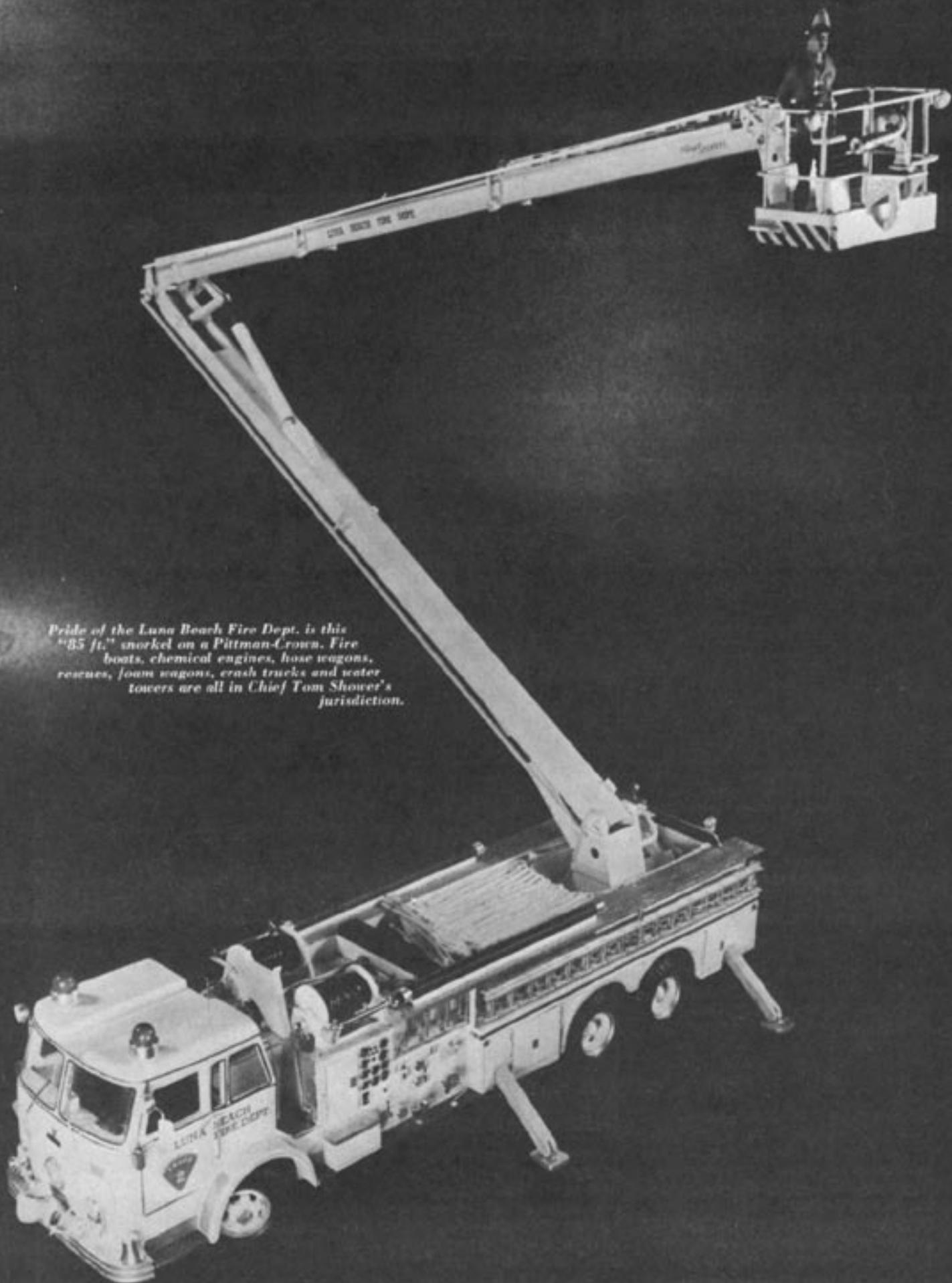


## Slot Racing

GEAR SHIFTS for SLOT RACERS  
LANDSCAPING H.O. TRACK  
"SOUPING UP" PITTMAN ENGINES

Hot Idea  
FIRE ENGINE MODELS





*Pride of the Luna Beach Fire Dept. is this "85 ft." snorkel on a Pittman-Crown. Fire boats, chemical engines, hose wagons, rescues, foam wagons, crash trucks and water towers are all in Chief Tom Shower's jurisdiction.*

# Anyone for a **SMALL** Fire?

By PHIL GLICKMAN

**W**HEN TOM SHOWERS signs out the log book at Engine Company 31 in Paramount, California and heads for his Bellflower home, he loses one identity and assumes another.

One minute he's Captain Tom Showers, veteran fire officer of 20 years service with the Los Angeles County Fire Dept. . . . the next, he's Chief Tom Showers of the Luna Beach Fire Department.

This dual life has been going on for more than ten years and his superior, Chief Engineer Keith Klinger, doesn't mind a bit. In fact, he sanctions this "moonlighting" on Shower's part.

First, let's take a look at Luna Beach: Population: 100,000 plus, Area: approximately 20 square miles.

Four fire stations serve the community with 15 pieces of apparatus, four fire

prevention and service cars, and one fire boat.

There are more than 600 "running cards" in the signal office.

"Running cards" denote fire alarm box locations and reflect the hazards of the area which determine the number and types of fire apparatus that respond to an alarm.

Showers is also responsible for the

Luna Beach hydrant system, signal and electrical departments and its personnel.

Luna Beach is a typical city: industrial areas, storage tanks containing hazardous and volatile liquids and gasses, commercial and business districts, residential and a harbor area.

The biggest problem to the readers of this article is, Luna Beach can not be found on any map. It's mythical. But



*"Captain" and "engineer" discuss "oil leakage" on Engine #1 at the Luna Beach Station #1.*

*This 1958 Ford pump chassis is a model of a rig Chief Showers found in the Hague, Holland.*





*London Fire Brigade Dennis Pump-Escape is an exact reproduction of the actual rig.*



*Escape ladder mounts the rear of this pumper and can easily be moved into position and extended.*

Tom Showers isn't. And the equipment that goes to service the fire protection needs of Luna Beach are real too, only scaled 3/8 inch to 1 foot.

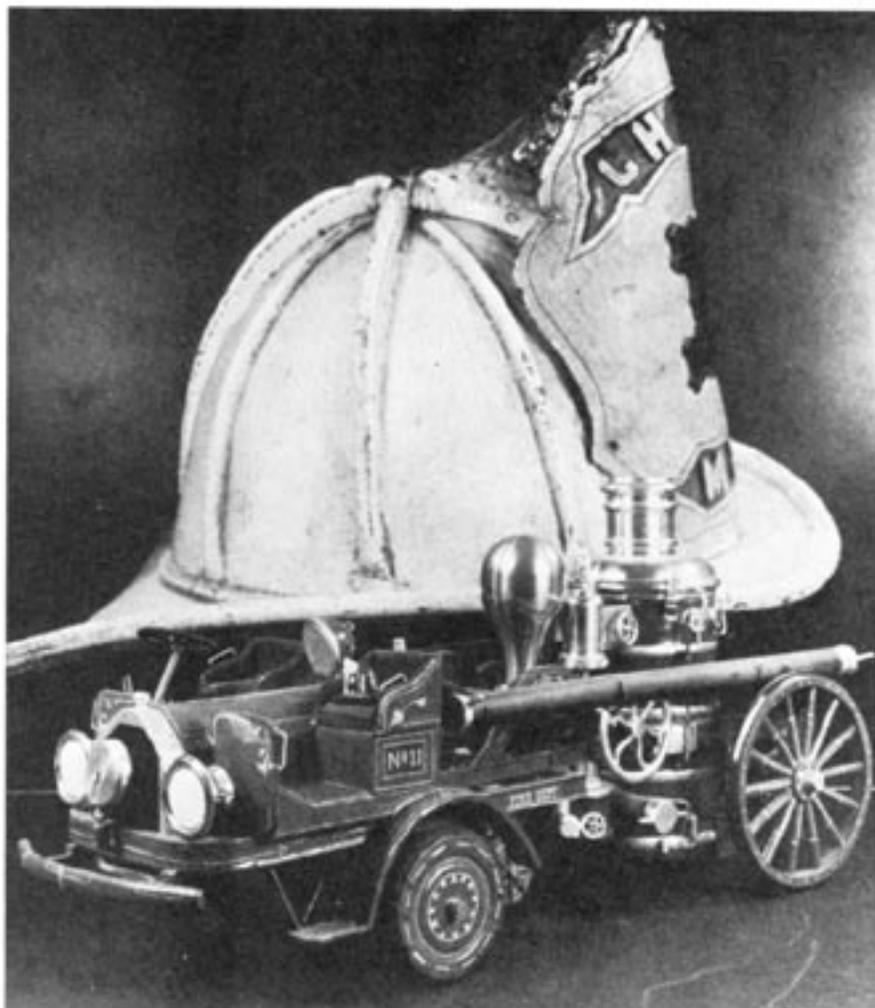
Showers admits that he's like a letter carrier who, on his days off likes to take walks. "I've always been interested in firefighting," he said, "and model making just seemed to fit in with my job."

Showers first began his firefighting career in the Army while stationed in Hawaii in 1940. He was a military fire chief when Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941.

But he prefers to talk more about his models. He began building model fire equipment in 1941, and to date has completed more than 200. Types and vintages are from the hand drawn pumps of 1740 to the most modern pumpers and "snorkels" of 1965. Fire boats, chemical engines, hose wagons, rescues, foam wagons, crash tracks and water towers are all represented in Tom's study and workshop.

Almost every major manufacturer of American fire equipment is represented: Seagrave, Ahrens-Fox, Crown, American-La France, Mack, Pirsch, International,

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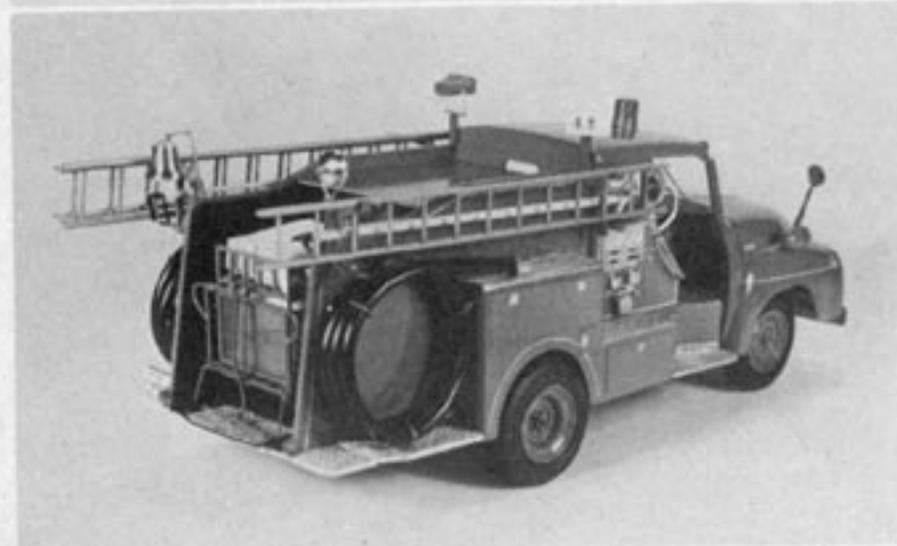
*The antique fire helmet accents this 1900 Amoskeag Steamer on a 1910 Seagrave tractor.*



*A true classic in American fire fighting equipment was this 1922 Ahrens-Fox Pumper.*



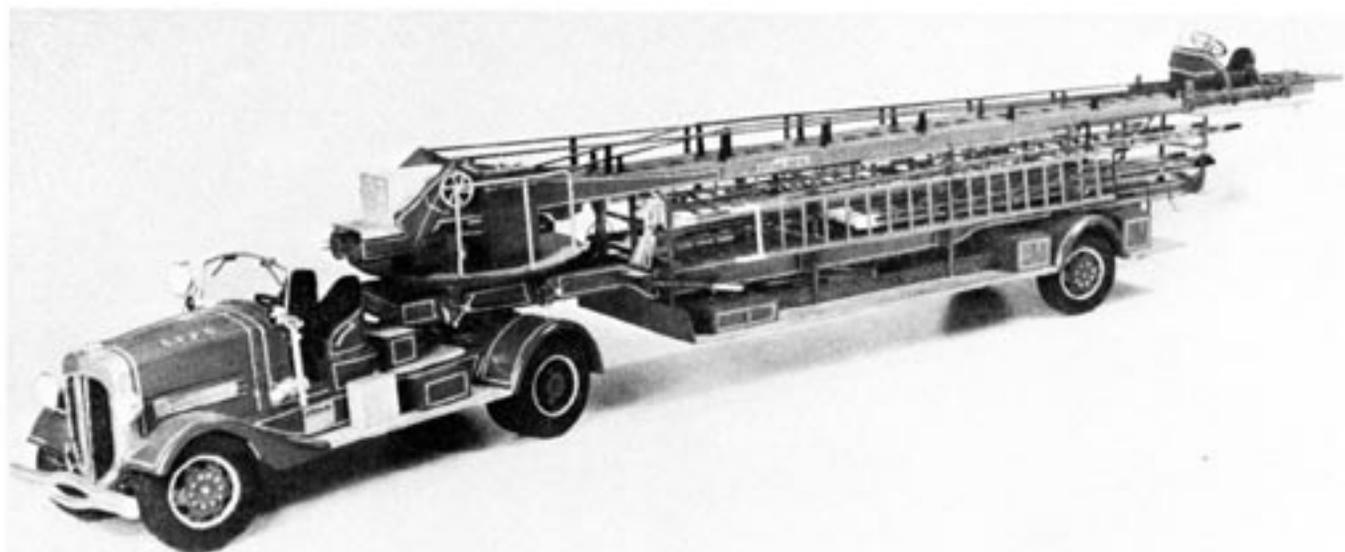
*A far cry from the rickshaw is the Showers' version of the Japanese 1964 Morita tender.*



*Finishing touches are added to a replica of a Los Angeles F.D. pumper by Showers.*



*Every detail on this Morita pump-hose tender has been authentically reproduced by Showers.*



*One of San Francisco's finest was this 1939 Aherns-Fox 85 ft. Aerial.*

Ford Chevrolet etc. And foreign too.

After a recent trip to Europe, Tom began to construct engines and aerial trucks of Magirus, Mercedes, Austin, Dennis, and Metz manufacture. Even a Japanese rig . . . a diminutive Morita pumper and hose-tender combination.

Tom begins every model by measuring the actual engine. If he can't get to the piece of equipment, he has the use of manufacturer's blueprints.

His 35 mm camera captures close-ups of door handles, city emblems, headlights, pump control panels and the manifold details that are so distinctive to each engine.

Basic materials for his models include sheet basswood, aluminum and brass tubing, plastic in tube and sheet form are utilized extensively and bar stock of aluminum for turning out bells and sirens on his jeweler's lathe.

Wheels are always a problem and Tom usually purchases commercial kits to obtain them. But alterations are commonplace. You can't have a wheel with six lugs when the actual model has nine, can you?

Color is important . . . very important with Showers. Besides the traditional red, many cities have color schemes that would shock Pablo Picasso. Chartreuse is the "wild" color of one aerial ladder in his collection, and canary yellow is there too. Deep burgundy reddish-purple is the coating for an up-state New York pumper. White is fast becoming a popular

color among fire services in the United States. In fact, Luna Beach's department has all white rigs.

When Showers completes a model, there's usually 100 to 150 hours labor involved . . . not counting research.

Of the 200 models that he has built, only 75 remain in his study, tucked neatly behind sliding glass doors in cases that rim the room. Others have been given to friends, donated to museums, and occasionally sold to connoisseurs of the master model makers art. In one corner of the study a four-tiered cabinet holds the Luna Beach Fire Department — the headquarters building and three outlying stations are displayed. The interiors are lit and the three-inch blankets tucked in

the beds of the dormitory gives one an every feeling that Gulliver must have experienced when gazing into Lilliputian cottages.

In a custom transparent lucite case on one of the cabinets is a perfect model of L.A. County Engine #31, a 1958 Crown Pumper and an exact miniature duplicate of the engine Showers commands.

"It's for my nephew in Copenhagen," he said, "We're," he paused, looked at his wife Lisa and took her hand, "going back next year, and I want him to see what our engines are like."

I asked, "Are you recruiting for the L.A. County Fire Department?"

He winked, "Once a fireman, always a fireman."



*Standing in front of the cases that house most of his collection, Showers displays one of his current projects, a fully equipped fire boat.*



*Showers checks a siren for adjustment on an aerial ladder truck at Luna Beach #4.*

*Hydraulic lift Gorter water tower built in 1905 by the L.A.F.D. was motorized in 1915. Actual rig is still in working condition.*



*The four Luna Beach fire stations are housed on this specially designed shelf.*



*This Model "A" is a combination Chief's car and chemical tank.*