

# HMAVIEWPOINT

## Meaningful Work



Stacey Walthers Naffah  
President,  
Wm. K. Walthers, Inc.

**W**hen I came to work in the family business in 2009, I got plenty of questions about my career choice. Also, I got a lot of questions about model railroading and hobbies' relevance and impact in our fast-paced, evolving world.

I confidently answered that I saw the relevance and believed it would continue to grow and evolve. I shared that my career choice was in pursuit of my guiding career (and life) philosophy – to pursue meaningful work.

I shared the two key components supporting that pursuit of meaningful work. First, I found great meaning in working with my father and stewarding our family's business forward with our team in Milwaukee. Next, I said that I found great significance in our work and the impact we can make through our hobbies.

While I might not have fully understood it back in 2009, I could see our hobby's powerful impact on those who already enjoyed it. I could also see its significant potential for those who hadn't experienced it yet. It energized me to think of the possibilities in the simple act of inviting newcomers in a fresh new way. I was excited about the STEM/STEAM trend, offering creative opportunities to lure kids away from screens and connecting people to learn and grow through shared experiences. I become even more confident in my understanding of these truths and my conviction as a business leader and advocate to support the creation of a positive impact.

This strengthened conviction comes from watching hobbies in action. Watching communities of enthusiasts create, learn, grow and gather together. Watching hobby shops innovate and find new ways to connect with customers and sell the products we create. Watching vendor partners release exciting new products. Watching industry partners rally together through organizations like NRHSA, HMA and WGH to support each other in finding success in the complicated business of helping others to have fun. Watching young kids turn into confident modelers. Watching new people accept our invitation to join the hobby and be thrilled to be aboard. Watching the surge of interest, enthusiasm, and welcome respite hobbies provided during the past few years.

I recently read an Inc. article about an Olympic gold medalist diver who credits his 2021 gold medal to his hobby of knitting. The article shared that multiple research studies have shown hobbies are good for people – whatever those hobbies may be. They help support positive mental health, improve resilience, create higher performance in their chosen endeavors, and provide a deeper engagement with others and a fuller sense of self (among other benefits). How great is that? And, how great is it to see others recognize what we see and believe, too?

Ours is not an easy business – it can be challenging but rewarding. Through it all, remember what you do matters. Hobbies matter. We are in this together. We all have a role to play. I look forward to continued partnership and effort to spread the word and grow our impact together. In my humble opinion, the world will be a happier, healthier, more productive place for it. And I remain "all in" for pursuing that kind of meaning in my life and work. **HM**

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### Hobby Manufacturers Association

1410 East Erie Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19124 • Phone: 267-341-1604  
E-mail: heather.stoltzfus@hmahobby.org • Web: www.hmahobby.org