



DISPATCH

Spring 1984

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DISPATCH

Official Publication of the
National Association of S Gaugers

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DISPATCH welcomes articles, photographs, art, cartoons, and other model railroad or railroad-related materials as contributions by the membership. Authors of articles accompanied by high quality photographs will receive \$10.00 compensation for photo processing costs. Photos should be a minimum 4" by 5" with good contrast. Contributions to DISPATCH and correspondence to the DISPATCH staff should be sent to the Editor.

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ELAINE'S ELABORATIONS

How To Win Your Wife Over To Your Hobby

by Elaine Powell

There is a young wife, not far from me, who is, I imagine, the embodiment of every model railroader's "fantasy women" -- she puts little love notes in the hopper cars on her husband's model railroad for him to find while he's working on his pike!

Unfortunately, from my conversations with many S Gaugers, I've learned that an attitude such as the one displayed by this wife is not the norm. And many times, especially since the publication of an earlier editorial in which I explained my reasons for liking Sam's hobby, I have been approached by model railroaders with requests for advice and suggestions of what they can do to win their wives over to their hobby. This is a valid concern and not one to be lightly dismissed. The need for a wife to feel, if not overwhelmingly positive, then at least not hostile to your hobby, is obvious. We all want our mates to share in the things that give us pleasure, or, as a minimum, to accept these activities. So in response to these requests, I offer some practical suggestions which may, hopefully, dispell some of the tension that may exist over the subject of model railroading in your marriage.

First, let me hasten to explain, I am assuming you have a basically sound marriage. I am not a marriage counselor and a union that uses a dislike of model railroading, or anything else, as a symptom of major underlying problems, is not the one that I can deal with. Here we are considering only healthy, stable marriages which have, over the years, occasionally confronted some misunderstandings in the area of the husband's love of trains.

There are in general five different areas of potential conflict in husband-wife relations over model railroading. These are space, mess, money, attention, and time. Many model railroaders, I've

found, are aware of these delicate areas and some have worked out some very creative solutions; so here, then, based on my own experience and that of many hobbyists I've talked with, are some approaches you should consider to make your hobby more acceptable to your wife:

1. SPACE. Most model railroaders, I feel, are extremely sensitive about this issue and that is why most model railroaders end up in the basement, attic, or other seldom-used places where they can spread out without infringing on the area needed by other family members for their activities. I give credit also to a general willingness for model railroaders to share their space with furnaces, bicycles, washer and dryer, and a host of other odds and ends of various sizes and shapes. If you're having difficulty in this area I urge you to be sure your pike is not taking more than your fair share of the total space available to family members. You might point out, as one model railroader I know did to great advantage, that the space under the layout makes excellent storage for a number of household items. You also might consider finding some corner of the house where you can help your wife set up her sewing machine or whatever activity gives her pleasure and release from tension.

2. MESS. The good side of the space conflict is that once it is resolved, it is a dead issue. Not so with the mess. Gentlemen, let me be blunt: if you really want your wife to like your hobby, clean up the mess it generates! At the end of an afternoon spent building scenery, all you may be able to see are the beautiful hills and valleys you've created. But if all your wife sees is plaster tracked all over the house, you've taken a giant step backward in making your hobby attractive to her. The issue here is fundamental fairness: clean up your own mess!

3. MONEY. As we all know, how money is spent is a potentially touchy issue in all marriages; and yet I know several model railroaders who have handled this problem with great success and eliminated tremendous tension as a result. One couple I know operates on a basis of complete equality: for every dollar he spends on his hobby she gets to spend a

dollar on whatever she wants. If that sounds a bit extreme to you, consider some sort of mutually agreed upon budget for your hobby and stick to it. The important thing here is to face the issue squarely. To ignore the conflict of money is to risk building up great resentment toward your hobby which you can never dispell.

4. ATTENTION. Model railroaders do have a tendency to have tunnel vision. They spend a lot of time thinking about their hobby -- about the next engine they're going to buy, about the neat change they can make in their pike's operating system, about the exciting article they just read in the hobby press (the DISPATCH, of course!); and all wives of model railroaders eventually become familiar with that vacant stare that means he's mentally "off with his trains" when he's supposed to be talking about the kids or the P.T.A. So gentlemen, really look at your wife, talk to her, think about her. On the way home from work when you've stopped off at a hobby shop to pick up the latest whatever, occasionally stop off also at a store to bring home some perfume or flowers for her. It's a shrewd diplomatic maneuver that will show her you were thinking about her as well as the trains.

5. TIME. This is, I feel, the most difficult problem area, and one which needs constant communication and negotiation. Our own family is one of four very busy, active, and involved people going in lots of different directions; and juggling everyone's schedules takes time, effort, and skill. To complicate all this, the fact is that what each person in a family chooses to do with his/her time has consequences for every other person in the family. But there are some general truths that can be used as guidelines and to help set priorities: As a husband, you need to spend some time with your children. As a human being, you need to spend some time with your friends and with the things you truly enjoy doing. The catch is that all of these needs are true of your wife and children, too. Occasionally all these needs will mesh and you will be able to plan a hobby-related activity that you can take the family to and that all will enjoy. But often this will not

work. All I can say is that the managing of family time is the most challenging area in our life and one which requires the most sensitive thought and loving confrontation.

There is much more I could say about all of these subjects and I will do so in the future if there is further demand; but for the present I have one more suggestion: Do not try to turn your wife into a model railroader. For a number of complex reasons, women usually do not respond to mechanical things as men do; and it is far more gracious of you to accept this reality. Nevertheless, it is perfectly possible for her to enjoy your hobby in her own way. And if, in openly and honestly confronting these issues together you can make your wife find pleasure in seeing you enjoy your hobby, you have truly accomplished an admirable thing that will enrich both your lives.

SCRATCH BUILDING:

By an avid proponent of the art!

by Phil Hodges

It wasn't too many years back when model railroaders had but two choices when building models: build from scratch or don't build at all! All model railroaders were by necessity scratch builders. Of course, we're playing in a different ballpark nowadays.

The advent of injection molded plastic models plus a marketing avalanche of excellent kits has made it possible to build an entire layout without building a single model from scratch. As the model railroad industry moves forward, developing more and more items which simplify and speed up model building, the scratch builder will become more and more the eccentric rather than the norm.

I don't mean to imply that scratch building has become model railroading's dinosaur quite yet. There are still alot of scratch builders in this hobby. But it is becoming increasingly hard to explain to our non-scratch building friends why anyone would spend a couple hundred hours building a model from scratch when a similar kit might be built in a fraction of the time.

kit form; and, most important, the pride and sense of accomplishment a modeler feels upon completion of a project that's not found on 90% of the layouts in the U.S.

So 'with all this going for it why aren't modelers crawling over each other to buy scratch building supplies? Well, procrastination is probably the worst demon working against scratch building. How often have you heard the cliché "I just don't have the time or patience for scratch building?" I usually file that one somewhere between balderdash and B.S.! I believe everyone has the time and patience to scratch build if they want to. I feel many don't want to because it's easier to dismiss scratch building as a foolish waste of time than to try and fail. I pity the "If I don't build it, I can't blow it" bunch for the limbo they create for themselves.

I know all about procrastination first hand. I sat safe and secure in my boring armchair for over 10 years. Believe me, I'm far happier with myself and model railroading as a hobby since I traded that darned chair for a workbench. 'Nough said; back to the workbench.

Of course, the reasons for scratch building are many, with each modeler having his own explanation for his building models "the hard way". Mine is simple: I can't follow directions! I don't believe I've ever gotten past step 3 on any kit's score card. The few kits I have built for review were constructed using scratch building techniques I'm comfortable with; not the instruction sheet. I'm simply not good at following someone else's program.

Of course there are better reasons for building models from scratch. Its greatest attribute is, in my opinion, its flexibility. The scratch builder has total control over a project's design, method of construction, and material selection. Additional pluses are: reduced cost (depending on the project); extra points at contests; enables one to build models of free-lance or prototype subjects not available in

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

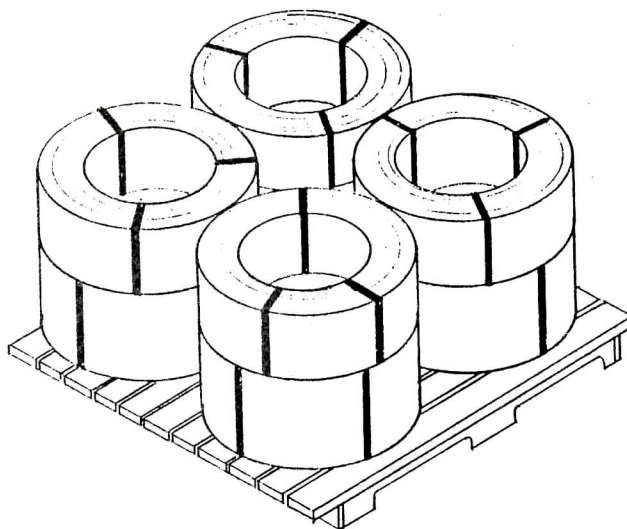
by Lewis Rennig, Jr.

Wood pallets or skids are used by industry to aid in the handling of materials. Small standard pallets make it easy for a fork-lift to move several small items at once or they can be used as an aid in moving odd-shaped pieces. Larger skids are built from heavier lumber, 4" x 4" oak, or even larger wood to handle extremely large loads. Eye bolts are often installed in the corners to help in lifting loads needing the use of a crane.

Building these pallets has been described in several articles over the past years. So, for a change of pace, I am going to give you some ideas and descriptions of some easy loads that you can adapt to use with these pallets.

One easy load is 55 gallon drums available from several sources. Paint the drums the desired color or colors, glue them to the pallet and then cut two thin pieces of tape or paper. Wrap the one piece of tape around the top and the other around the bottom of the drums to represent the steel tension bands often used to hold the drums together. Paint the bands black and place the finished pallet on a loading dock. When stacking pallets of drums, don't stack higher than three or four high, or there may be a danger of the bottom drums collapsing.

Rough castings being sent from the foundry to the machine shop are usually fastened to a pallet. Large or odd-shaped castings may be mounted on custom-made skids. Small castings and pipe fittings can be placed in a skid with sides to avoid the expense of packing. Items used to model these castings are easily found in your junk box. Pieces from old mechanical toys make an excellent source for parts. Don't spend time looking for a piece that resembles something familiar; it is better to use something unrecognizable. Just like many of the flat bed truck loads you see on the highway, they often carry things unrecognizable.



Again the old thrown-out mechanical toy parts can be used to represent repair parts for a foundry, factory, etc. If you find an interesting part which is broken, cracked, or split, mount it on a skid, set it on a loading dock and it becomes a broken machine part either being shipped for repairs or going to the scrap yard.

Sheet metal coils are another common item shipped on pallets. In making these coils you will need either a typing eraser or a drafting eraser. The type needed is the one where you pull a string and peel a section off exposing more eraser. Remove each section carefully, taking care not to bend them. Each eraser will yield about 30 coils. If removed properly they will have a tendency to coil themselves. Tighten the coil by holding it between your thumb and index finger, then pull the loose end. Rewrap the end and with a dab of glue fasten it to the coil. Paint the coils either silver or aluminum. Finish them using a fine brush or a thin magic marker to paint the three tension bands on each one. Glue these steel coils to a pallet and stack them two or three high, and they will be ready for shipping to the stamping machines.

Remember, if there are any details you think others may be interested in reading about, send them to me:

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SCRATCH-BUILDING STEAM ENGINE MECHANISMS

PART III: ELIMINATING SIDE ROD BINDS

by Sam Powell

Now that you have your steam engine frame with wheels and retainer plate fitted, it's time to fit the side rods to the wheel spacing and work out the binds that are bound to be there. Start by removing the retainer plate and drivers and identifying properly which of your previously pilot-drilled side rod blanks is for which side and distinguishing forward from rearward on both the frame and on the side rods.

Place the side rod blank against the side of the frame in roughly the same position it would occupy were the wheels in place and slide it forward until the front pilot hole just lines up with the front edge of the front bearing. At this point, each of the other holes should line up with exactly the same spot on their respective bearings. If they do not, you will need to move the hole that doesn't line up by filing one side of the hole with a needle file. You are limited in how far you can move it by the size of your crank pin. When you are satisfied that the center of each hole can be lined up over the same spot on each bearing (both vertically and fore and aft), then drill the holes out to the proper size for the crank pins. Check your spacing again against the frame. This time, if they won't all line up, you can move a hole only by soldering a piece of shim brass on one side of the hole and filing the other. Repeat the process for the other side rod and assemble all.

Now the moment of truth has arrived. Place your thumb and index finger on the gear on the geared driver and slowly rotate it in each direction several full turns. If you have done your work perfectly, your mechanism will operate in this manner with only the slightest of hesitations, which a little bit of lubrication and running will smooth out. If you have major problems, you will have to go on a problem-solving hunt. Here is a list of the things that will cause problems that should be checked out before working further on the side rods:

1. Side rod crank pin screws protruding through the back of a driver and catching on the frame itself.
2. An axle binding in the bearing. See that you have removed all flash from the bearing blocks and that the screws holding them in are not sticking too far through.
3. A bearing which is too high or too low on one or both sides. This condition does not make smooth operation impossible, but your engine is likely to track improperly if this occurs on either the first or last driver. The remedy is simple: remove the screws, break your offending bearing loose, and reglue it properly, replacing the screw when the glue has set.
4. Side rods catching on counterweights or axle hubs where they stick through the casting. Either place a washer behind the side rod, or file down the offending part. Filing off projections is preferred as clearance between main rods and side rods can become critical later on.

Once you're satisfied that your problem really and truly is in the side rods and no where else, you can begin your hunt for side rod binds. But let's say a few words about what makes the system work before we go on to solving problems. Top dead center (TDC) is an expression that describes when the crank pin is exactly in line with the cylinder and axle line and is changing the direction of its travel from forward to rearward or vice versa. At this point, the wheel can get mixed up and not know if it should continue rotating in the same direction or go back where it came from. At this point it is up to the side rod on the other side, which is at the 90° position to either push or pull the wheel beyond the TDC position. Every crank pin goes through TDC twice and gets pushed once at 90° and pulled once at 90°.

Now I'd like to bring up the subject of driver quartering. What is important about driver quarter is that all drivers are the same and not that they are in perfect quarter. This means that when all crank pins on one side of the engine are at TDC the crank pins on the other side of the engine will be the same num-

ber of degrees away from TDC, preferably 90°. If this is not the case, the crank pin spacing will change when all wheels rotate from 90° above TDC to 90° below TDC. It doesn't work well that way. I have seldom found my commercial driver sets off by enough to present problems, but we will see how to determine if this is our problem.

With your problem mechanism in hand, rotate the gear until it binds. While holding a slight pressure on the gear, gently wiggle the other drivers and see which drivers have a slight play in them both rotationally and laterally. Those that have this play will be ruled out as trouble spots on this particular bind rotating in this direction. When you have found the bad guy, more than likely one of his crank pins will be right at TDC, unable to decide which way to go. Remove the crank pin from the TDC side of the non-geared driver and see how the crank pin hole in the driver lines up with the side rod hole, once the tension is off the bind. If the holes do not line up from front to back, then the side rod hole on the TDC side is in the wrong place. If it doesn't line up in an up and down direction, then the side rod hole on the 90° side is in the wrong place. Sometimes it is a combination of both and the holes will mismatch on the diagonal. It is generally recommended to run diagnostic tests at all four TDC locations on that driver to make sure that changing the location of one hole is not going to introduce another bind somewhere else.

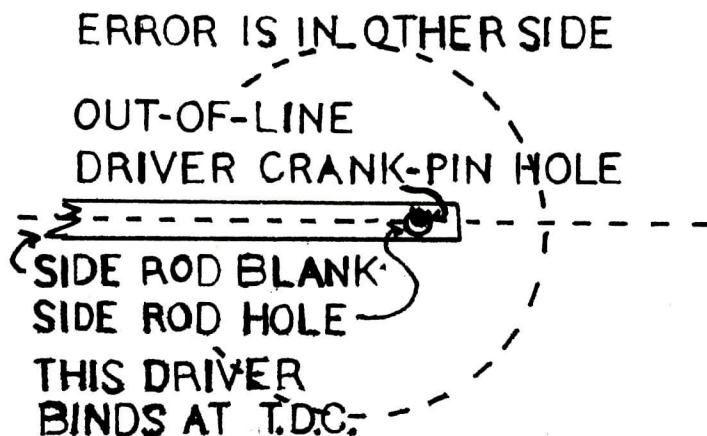
If the side rod hole on the TDC side needs to be moved, you must do that first. Once you have moved your TDC hole so that the side rod and driver do not mismatch fore and aft, then assemble all and try to recreate your binding situation. If and when it reoccurs, while maintaining just a little pressure on the gear, look to the other side of the driver. If the 90° crank pin is in a position requiring a push from its side rod, the side rod is too short. If the 90° crank pin is in a position to be pulled in order to get the binding pin across TDC, then the side rod on the 90° side is too long.

Here is your check for a driver out of quarter: If the TDC crank pin holes

line up fore and aft with a visual check and if you get a bind at both TDC locations on the same side of the same driver rotating the drivers in the same direction of travel, then the drivers are likely to be out of quarter, assuming you have eliminated all other problems. If the bind occurs at one TDC position during clockwise rotation of the driver and at the other TDC location during counter clockwise rotation, then the side rod hole is probably in the wrong spot. The easiest solution to out-of-quarter drivers is to return them to the manufacturer. It is possible to solve this problem yourself if you are stout-hearted and a good logical thinker, but you can also end up making things worse.

The thing that can make the process of tracking down binds so frustrating is that solving one problem may introduce another; and if you are not used to thinking in these terms, it can be difficult to think ahead as to what ramifications a change will make elsewhere. For example: if you shorten the side rod on the TDC side to make it line up, it may not be long enough to push the other crank pin across TDC when it is its turn to do this. Before moving the hole, check out this other condition. If your drivers are correct, then you will probably find a bind there also that will be corrected when you make your first change. If worse comes to worst, you can always start over and make a new side rod blank, using your bearing edges for spacing.

Next time we will address finishing the side rods as to detail, making main rods and mounting the cylinder castings.



HOW TO BUILD AN S GAUGE CLUB
or
How To Find Hundreds Of Friends
With The Same Crazy Hobby

by Tom Nimelli

Editor's Note: Many have heard of the phenomenal success of the Cuyahoga Valley S Gaugers Association but exactly how this group grew so quickly has been a mystery to many. The DISPATCH is grateful to Tom Nimelli who has taken the time from his busy schedule to relate some of the history, philosophy, and activities of this outstanding S Gauge Club. In this issue's installment, Tom discusses how the group grew to its present roster of 125 members. In the Summer DISPATCH he will explain more about the activities that keep them coming back to meetings month after month.

The Cuyahoga Valley S Gaugers Association was started in 1939 by three staunch S Gaugers, John Sudimak, Bernie Fate, and Howard Philips. They met off and on at each others homes. Today the CVSGA is an organization with a roster of over 125 members. I am sure you are asking yourself several questions, like "What happened?", "Where did all these people come from?", and, "What do you do with them, now that you have them?"

First of all, what happened is this: The club remained a small group meeting off and on through the mid 1970's. At that time the few die-hards put together a so-called portable layout on an old ping pong table. This layout with one loop of American Flyer track and one loop of scale track was the original attraction that eventually led to the tremendous growth of the CVSGA.

I was fortunate to meet this group at a public train show. They had an old AF train running around their ping pong table. Going up to them and starting to talk with them was my first mistake. I was greeted with helpful answers to my questions and an invitation to the next meeting. Going to that next meeting was my second mistake. I found myself looking forward to the meetings and train shows. They relaxed me so much from the normal day-to-day hassles that I was again hooked on my childhood hobby.

Taking the portable layout to local train shows has a lot to do with where all the people came from. We find that people are attracted to this portable layout. Many first see an old Flyer engine running around the track that is just like the one they got for Christmas when they were 7 or 8 or 10 years old. Once a person is attracted to the layout, we talk to them. But I'll explain a little more about the recruiting later in the article.

The first layout on the ping pong table met with an early demise as the result of weather and doors hitting it on the way in and out of train shows. A new layout was soon built from donated scrap wood and hours of labor. The trains that ran on the layout were and still are whatever train a member brings along from his own collection.

About this time, in early 1981, Lee McCarty suggested we host the 1982 NASG convention. Some of us thought he was absolutely nuts! Many of our members had never been to a convention (did not even belong to NASG, for that matter) let alone host a NASG convention. But I really believe this was a turning point for the organization. We had a purpose, realized the need for working further on our layout, and started to work on the logistics of a convention. We formed a committee to find a hotel, arrange tours, food, etc. And I had the nerve to open my mouth and suggest we run a public flea market in conjunction with the convention.

Now you have to realize that we did not have any treasury at this point at all and we had no formal organization of officers. But what we did have was a group of good friends, some a little crazier than others. After some brainstorming, we decided that we would ask members for \$5.00 per year membership dues to cover postage. Postage for what? Why, a monthly newsletter, of course (and a little convention mailings). The newsletter came out, as promised, monthly. These first newsletters were hand written by Lee McCarty and copied on the nearest Xerox machine. They told mainly of the time and place of the next meeting.

We were also fortunate at this time to get a request to have our layout at a Christmas Santa's Workshop for one solid month. The donation we received for appearing at this show was used as seed money for the 1982 convention and enabled us to breathe a little easier. John Sudimak ran one of his Rex dock-siders for the whole month at the show. We figured it ran 450 actual miles that month -- what a workhorse of an engine! But we also found out that we were running down the rails with all these shows. The Tin Plate wheels were riding on the ties; the rail simply had to be replaced. The Santa's Workshop was a lot of work, but a lot of fun, too. Club members took turns running trains and seeing the magic of trains reflected in the eyes of kids.

The convention came and went -- successfully. Thanks to the flea market, our treasury was a little fatter and our organization was becoming known in the Cleveland and Akron areas of Northern Ohio. The ABC and NBC affiliate television stations had sent cameras to the show and we made the 6 o'clock news. Numerous newspaper articles had appeared, a cable television group did a feature, and many radio stations announced our show. All of this was done for free! We had written letters to the media explaining who we were, what we were doing, and the newspapers, radio and television all responded. They helped us tell people that S gauge is alive and well in the 80's.

We participated in more train shows with our layout. The requests for information kept coming, so we put together a one-page flyer describing the club and what we do. Bill Geracci who had come forward during the convention preparation is a graphic artist and he did the layout for this flyer. We have been very fortunate; every time we need some professional help, someone comes out of the roundhouse with the skills needed. Time and again this has happened. The club has continued to grow. The low dues, monthly newsletter, and monthly meetings continue. This is what has happened to the small group of guys called CVSGA.

But still you are asking, where did all these people come from? I guess the

biggest part of the answer to that can be summed up on one phrase, "word of mouth". Talking about S gauge is probably second only to actually handling, playing with the trains for most of us. So at every opportunity, do just that if you want your club to grow. By that I mean talk about the enjoyment you personally get from our hobby and the terrific people you meet, not necessarily how many pieces you have or still want.

Many new members of the CVSGA have joined through conversations at the train shows we attend with our layout. We talk, pass out the new promotion brochure and usually get one new member for every six or eight people we really talk with.

Other new members come to CVSGA as guests with our current members. Very few people ever come to a meeting as a guest and leave without becoming a member. We even have gotten a few new members "on referral" from train and hobby shops. Let the stores know your group exists. A friendly relationship can be really good for your club and the train/hobby shops.

One "don't" when it comes to new members -- don't tell someone that he lives too far away for your group. You might be surprised at how often a person who is enjoying himself will show up, even if he has to come 100 miles or more. We have several members who regularly attend almost every function even though it is almost always at least a 90 minute drive each way. Some people won't realize they live too far away unless you tell them!

THE COVER

Live steam for railfans was a rare treat during the late 60's and early 70's. One bright spot in an otherwise gloomy picture was ex-Nickleplate Berkshire #759, owned by the High Iron Company. Here we see her leading one of the spirited Spring specials that thrilled so many before her recent retirement. Her impact on S Gauge still lives in the fine kits of this locomotive produced by S Scale Loco and Supply. Cover drawing by Deane Mellander.

A QUICK COURSE IN WEATHERING

by James M. Soberman

In the past ten years that I have been a model railroader I must have read at least a dozen articles on how to weather rolling stock. Paint, chalk, acrylic, oil paint, and literally, garden variety dirt all have their places and I use each of them as my needs dictate. Each one has its advantages and its disadvantages.

Weathering a model, be it an American Models box car, a Lionel or American Flyer conversion, or a carefully assembled kit or scratch-build does not have to be difficult or traumatic. Of all the techniques I know of, I find myself going back to two of the first I learned; that being a simple two-step overspray or a light brush over.

Method One: Quick Weathering With An Airbrush

For years I used this method with the most inexpensive airbrush I could buy. Of course, the better your sprayer the subtler the effects you can get. Before you start to weather any model make sure that your decals are dry and set. I like to overspray the lettering with a light spray of Testors Dulcoat to protect the lettering during handling.

Mix up a light wash of grimy black paint or equivalent with a lot of thinner. Make sure that your paint is compatible with the material your model is made of. Lightly spray the model. Don't forget the roof and floor. Remember that dirt settles on flat surfaces so go a little heavier on the areas you would think dirt would settle on. Again I have to emphasize do everything lightly. The trick is to create a subtle weathered look. Lightly overspray the car; don't repaint it. Now let the model dry a little bit.

While you let this first coat dry, mix up another thin wash of the same color paint as the car. Lightly overspray the entire car again with this wash. This coat will do two things for the overall effect: First, it will blend the "dirt" into the car so it will not show up so starkly. Secondly, it

will give your lettering a faded effect. After the car dries completely overspray it again with the Dulcoat. Clean any paint off the wheelsets and you're ready for the right-of-way.

Method Two: Quick Weathering By Overbrushing

Mix up a thin wash of the paint. Use a very broad camels hair or natural hair brush. They are available in art supply stores or in drug stores sold as make-up brushes. Apply the wash to the model. I strongly recommend that you put the model up on blocks when painting. Handling the model when wet will probably leave blemishes that may be difficult to hide. A blend-in coat can be applied with the brush if you're very careful. Wash out the brush thoroughly when finished.

Variations On A Theme

If you want to take these two basic weathering techniques further, consider mixing the two methods just outlined. A rust wash on a steel car and rivet strips combined with a grime overspray and a blend-in spray can give you a nice effect.

Rolling stock from different parts of the country weather differently -- dust from the far west, mud from the northeast. You may want to use mud, dust, and other earth colors as washes. Look at the pictures of prototypes in books and magazines. Look at freight cars in your local yard or siding. O.K., I told you how to do it, now do it. Weather that train!

DEADLINE NOTICE

The deadline for material for the Summer '84 issue of the DISPATCH is July 15.



RAIL JOINERS

News of Local S Gauge Clubs

Editor's Note: Things certainly move fast in the S Gauge World! The DISPATCH is extremely pleased and excited to introduce the answer to Dick Cataldi's request for a new approach and emphasis in our own reporting of S Gauge club activities. Our new columnist prefers to be known as Silas Kayle (that right, S. Kayle), who has moved into his new position with energy and enthusiasm. From now on all correspondence relating to clubs should be sent to Silas. As a means of helping you get to know him better, we offer his own explanation of how he became an S Gauger:

"I figure that I moved out of toy trains and started model railroading when at age ten I bought Ideal structure kits for a Lionel setup I had combined with a school friend's. I then saw a small HO scale loop with a Varney Dockside in about 1948. I discovered the RMC and MR in the local library and through them Frank Ellison. I finally saved enough in 1950 to buy an Athern refer and 3' strip of track and I was no longer an armchair modeler. My parents moved often and I planned and built benchwork half a dozen times, only to restart after the first few feet of track were laid.

Shortly after marriage I took another look at S scale, the perfect size. After some ruminating over a card stock mockup of a freight car, I started with a Kinsman refer in 1962. I've spent many hours planning, dreaming, reading, modeling, rebuilding, and starting over. I wouldn't be surprised if I averaged 100 hours of time for every car and foot of track that has survived. I envy guys like Sam Powell who have so much to show for their efforts. I currently have a 9' completed town diorama/module and about 50' of track laid of this month's 20 year plan. I'm modeling the last week in September 1927 in New England someplace.

The women might like to know that my wife Sharon and I have six children (14 - 23 years) and own a small business which is a good source of insecurity."

Welcome to the DISPATCH, Sylas!

Greetings Fellow S Gaugers! I am quite pleased to be accepted as editor of this club column, formerly the Branch Lines. The name, Rail Joiners, was chosen for the obvious pun and because the various relationships which bind us together as groups of S Gaugers are as important as the rail joiners that we use. Without those rail joiners we would be sections of track rather than a smooth running railroad. The name change is to draw attention to the new emphasis along the lines suggested by Dick Cataldi in the last issue. That means compiling a profile of each club, occasionally highlighting a club, passing along good ideas, reporting the activities, and whatever else you would like to see here.

The first step is to identify and make contact with the S Gauge groups. I hope you will help me get started on the right track. Contact me (a postcard is sufficient) and let me know that your group exists, or even that you have plans to form a club. No club is too informal. If you have even occasional get-togethers with other hobbyists we'd like to know about it. Send a contact name, address and telephone number to: RAIL JOINERS, 8900 Birchwood Lane, Bloomington, MN 55438 (612/944-1111). I will be in touch with you to gather more information. If you want to skip that step you will find a questionnaire elsewhere in this issue. Please fill it in and send it along to me for the official NASG Rail Joiners file.

I'll be on the road from time to time and I hope to occasionally do some live field reporting of your activities. Thanks for your help. This should be fun.

Now for a brief recap of the news reported since last issue, eight clubs reporting:

SOUTHEASTERN Dan Navarre reported on
MICHIGAN what sounds like a real-
S GAUGERS ly active group. They
are planning on taking
15 feet of their modular layout for a
two club hook-up at the Kansas City NMRA
Convention. That should create a real
stir at the National! Regular work ses-
sions on the modules are held at Gaylord
Gill's home. This sounds like a really

promotion-oriented group with 23 members. They are also displaying at the NCR Spring Convention.

INLAND EMPIRE S GAUGERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST This bunch has 33 members and are looking for more. They have a 'S'ecret Project scheduled for May. I'd like to know the particulars of their contest and hear from other groups that have similar projects. It might be interesting to publish a comparison of the various approaches. Their February meeting was held in conjunction with a Swap Meet and Railroad Show at the Sheraton Hotel, but their newsletter didn't comment about it afterward. March was scheduled for Don Colville's house where Don has a fine blend of AF and Scale on his Colville and Watkins Railroad.

DELAWARE VALLEY S GAUGERS Here's another old-time group reported by Frank Titman. They met last March in Luther Stevens' apartment. Luther set up long tables for members to work on projects. Some old publications for browsing occupied the rest. A test track worked out several locos including David Bailey's UP Big Boy. Dave had bashed an AHM HO sound unit to fit. They felt it sounded as good as more expensive units. Here's proof even apartment dwellers can be active S Gauge club members.

AMERICAN FLYER S GAUGER'S OF THE ST. LOUIS AREA This informal group decided to get just formal enough to select a name, logo (by Pete Mihelick), and name Marty Glass, Treasurer, and Mo Berk Co-Coordinator (and reporter). This club also supports a sectional 8' x 12' display layout just recently completed. In addition to two shows it has seen extended exposure in a local car dealer's showroom through the pre-Christmas season. That's an idea. I wonder if they earned any funds in the venture...

STATE-LINE "S" GAUGERS I gather the state line in the name is the Wisconsin-Illinois boundary. Here is another very active group with a modular layout that sees plenty of exposure in shopping mall shows, etc.

Recently Art Doty donated a gavel inscribed "Formed 1981-Incorporated 1983" so they sound like a formal club with gavel even. The club received \$45 for participating in a mall show. Any other groups earning funds this way? They recently welcomed their 41st member, Bill Bakey.

BRISTOL S GAUGE RAILROADERS Bob Brown reports on this active S Gauge promotion group that seems to span from Maine to Massachusetts. They also display and are working on a railroad but I'm unclear as to whether it is modular or sectional or fixed. Sounds like the group is embarking on a cooperative effort to develop skills in scale modeling as their next big effort.

CUYAHOGA VALLEY S GAUGE ASSOCIATION This group, as reported by Michael Graham, has S Gauge has not one but two portable layouts and nearly 130 members! I'd like to know the reasons for a second layout. The old layout is scheduled for display even in the summer at Quaker Square on June 16 and 17. They have a secret project -- wonder what rules they follow? This club is purchasing its own rolling stock to travel with the layout(s).

PINE AND PRAIRIES S SCALE WORKSHOP This growing group helps its member Earl Larson display a fine sectional layout at Twin Cities train shows. They have a mini convention scheduled for May 5 & 6 with workshops, trade tables, railfanning, and food. Call Ken at 612-559-3780 for more details.

'S'o long for now -- Syllas Kayle



NASG—Convention

TRADE NEWS AND VIEWS

by Don Thompson

AMERICAN FLYER (mfg. by Fundimension, a division of General Mills) has announced their 1984 line of S Gauge trains. The Southern Historic American Railroad set #3 has a GP-9 diesel (original A.F. GP-7 with dynamic brake), triple hopper, gondola with cannister, box car, tank car with three domes, flat car with vans, and bay window caboose. All these are lettered for the Southern railroad. A B&O Chessie System low nose GP-20 diesel (chop nosed A.F. GP-7 shell with dynamic brake) is also being offered. Six new freight cars are being introduced: a 40' blue Conrail box car, a 40' Railbox, a NYC pacemaker box car, a PRR 40' box car, a NYC covered hopper, and a PRR covered hopper. This year's accessory is the sawmill. The engines this year are a radical change from past Fundimension practices. Instead of just repaints, something new has been done. These have exterior modifications that were not done by A.C. Gilbert. We hope these engines prove to be winners for Fundimension. Maybe we will see a new engine, freight or passenger car. How about a U-boat or a Trainmaster, or maybe a 50' box car for a real railbox? This is what A.F. needs, not more repainted PA's. One more bit of news: Fundimension has moved its production facility from Michigan to Mexico.

American Models (22055 W. Brandon, Farmington Hills, MI 48024) now has 4 wheeled passenger trucks available. These are RTR for lightweight (Streamline) and modernized P-70 passenger cars. The sideframe and bolster are injection molded Delrin. The sintered steel wheels have a RP-25 contour with needle bearing axles. These trucks are equilized and have Talgo American Models couplers attached (these can be removed). The retail price is \$6.95 per pair. The news on the streamline passenger cars is that the dies for the shells for the combine, coach and sleeper are now completed. The observation dies are being tested and may be completed now. I have seen the coach shell and it is super. The undecorated cars should be available for sale later this

summer. The following road names will be offered this fall: PRR, UP, SP and Great Northern Empire Builder. Ron tells us the dies have been started for the two bay, 55 ton open hopper. It will be the outside braced variety and is also due this summer.

AMITY STAR (Rt. 3, Box 140, Thomson, GA 30824) has released an SP 50' outside-braced wood automobile box car. These have pre-lettered side and ends by Gene Walp. This kit has wood sides, roof, floor and ends with cast metal detail parts. Price is \$21.95.

A&W PRESS (3246 Summerdale Ln., Columbus, OH 43220) say that they have the following decals available: #SS-1 Daylight, \$2.50; 21 sets of diesel decals (E's, GP's, and Turbines, NYC, PRR, NKP and others); 8 sets of passenger cars (20th Century and Pullman) and 25 sets of box cars. Prices range from \$2.00 for box cars and \$4.50 for the UP Turbine. Send LLSAE for current listings. I have not seen these yet. I hope these are for real and can help take the place of Enhorning.

DOWNS MODEL RAILROAD CO. (206 Leigh Ave., Gloucester City, NJ 08030) has moved from Clememton to the address given. Russ has also released a new floor/bolster conversion for the A.F. Reading style caboose. It comes in both unlighted (\$1.20) and lighted (\$1.90) versions. Add \$2.00 for shipping and handling. The A.F. box car floor die has been reworked for plastic injection molding. I have no price on this but it will be less than the metal floor and be lighter also. Russ has received new floors for the A.F. box car. He has changed the dyes. They are now made of plastic. Price is \$1.95 each. He says he will have the floors for American Models box car so that Ace trucks with knuckle couplers can be used.

G&W (115 Upland Rd., Syracuse, NY 13207) has been busy making a new "modernized" 40' RTR American Models box car. These cars have the roof walks removed, ladders shortened and all holes plugged before they are painted and lettered. They now have the following road names in stock: ICG (orange car with black and white lettering); ROCK (blue car with black/white lettering); L&N (blue car

with yellow billboard lettering); SOU (B.C. red car with white "green light" logo); CNW (B.C. red with white "employee owned" motto); ATSF (chinese red or B.C. red with white large circle and cross logo). The price for the modernized cars is \$32.50 each or roofwalk version of these cars can be purchased for \$29.50. If you don't want to order direct, your dealer can get these for you.

THE HOPPER LINE (1023 Salisbury-Unit 6, Sarnia, Ontario, Canada N7S 4N8) has added two more structure kits to its expanding S line. The S-2 Sand House at \$24.50 and S-3 Steel Water Tank at \$22.00

HOQUAT HOBBIES (Box 253, Dunellen, NJ 08812) newest kit is a 40' double sheathed GN wood box car. This kit is based on the GN car and has a steel end. The kit is \$16.50. This car can be built with wooden ends for \$13.95. Jeff also reports three new sides by Gene Walp are now in stock. They are the Land O'Lakes (yellow with red and black letterings); Hormel (yellow with multi-color lettering); and Michigan Alkali Co. (aluminum with black lettering). The price per set of sides is \$2.00.

NASG CLEARING HOUSE (c/o Mike Ferraro, 141-B Gordon Rd., Matawan, NJ 07747) is now sold out of the type III notch sided covered hoppers. He still has a few type II covered hoppers left. The price is now \$90.00 for NASG members and \$100 for non-members. Don't forget the \$3.50 each for shipping and handling. The results of the survey that was sent with all the covered hoppers are now in. With over a 70% return, the top three finishers were #1 - 10,000 gal. general service tank car, #2 - 10,000 gal. chemical tank car with dome platform, and #3 - Milwaukee Road 40' horizontal rib box car.

ORIENTAL MODELS (4001 N. St. Joseph Ave., Evansville, IN 47712) is now in Korea negotiating time to have the NW-2 made. These are expected to arrive in the fall. Some versions have now exceeded the initial 20 of each minimum. The Phase III may have a shorter run due to a lack of interest. Oriental has also given dealer prices on the NW-2. If you are interested, have your dealer place

an order for you now. These may end up like the RS-3, with some phases being sold out before they are delivered from Korea. The 20th Century Limited Passenger cars are now on hold.

OVERLAND (RR 2, Box 445, Muncie, IN 47302) should have received the S.P. 4-8-4 GS-4 Daylight steam engine. Tom had more made than were reserved, so if you would like one let your dealer know. The B&O box cars are due shortly, but the 12-1 Pullman and UP turbine are on hold for now. The PRR H-30 and H-32 covered hoppers have again been listed on the dealers reservation sheet as well as the S scale Burro crane. Prices and a fall arrival date were listed, so if you are interested order now.

SUNSET MODELS (138 W. Campbell Ave., Campbell, CA 95008) should have the Geeps in stock now. They asked for the dealers to send the money in to them at the end of April with an April 25th delivery date. After 3 years of waiting, I hope these finally come. They have also announced that the UP 4-6-6-4 challengers will be arriving in August.

TOMAR INDUSTRIES (9250 E. Napier Ave., Benton Harbor, MI 49002) has stunned the S world by releasing 256 new S Scale products. Leading the way are the lighted drumhead kits, with over 50 roadnames represented and more than 250 nametrains listed. These are priced at \$9.50 for a single and \$14.50 for a double. The drumhead kit includes a full-color train sign, metal housing, 1.5 volt lamp, ballast lamp, light diffuser, 4 diodes, hookup wire and instructions with illustrations. The list is too overwhelming to mention here so send a LLSAE for free catalog. Other new products are S Scale Hayes wheel stops, SF Kit #803 priced at \$2.10 for 2 pair, also Tomar-shoes. These are a track power pickup shoe that can be used in S on passenger cars or cabooses (kit #804 for 2 cars \$2.50) or Locos (kit #805 for \$2.50 for 2 locos).

TRAIN STUFF (2821 Asbury Ave., Wayside, NJ 07712) now has the following new kits in stock: 24923-AAR XM-2 40' double sheathed wood box car of 1925; 24924-AAR XM-1 40' single sheathed wood (outside braced) box car of 1925; 24925 X-29, PRR 40' steel box car with flat

PICTURESQUE

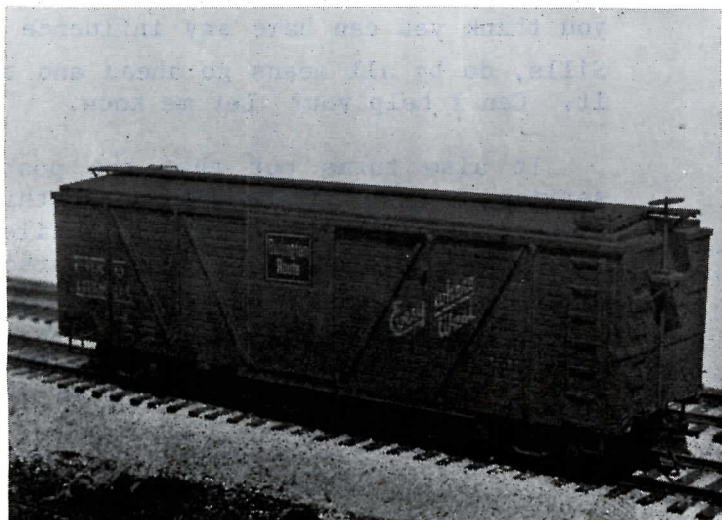


The excellent modeling of Wayne Pier is shown here in these photos taken by Wayne of models which he built from Train Stuff and S Scale Loco and Supply kits.

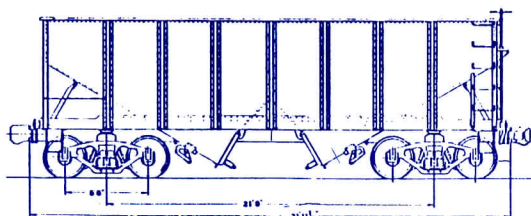


Above is an American Models Car, an NASG Covered Hopper, and a Train Stuff box car all pulled by his B&O Consolidation. The string of cars that followed (right) are all built from Train Stuff kits.

Below and lower right: close-ups of first two cars in train plus new hopper car loads offered by Train Stuff. Notice the difference between the siding and the hi iron in this scene.



ends, 24926 X-28, PRR 40' steel door and a half box car used for automobiles and furniture. All kits are priced at \$14.95 and have cast styrene sides, roofs and ends with wood floor and cast metal detail parts. Wayne showed us his next product at our last train meet. They are a line of coal loads for both the 55 and 70 ton A.F. hoppers. (Not just one load, but many different grades.) Pea, egg, mill run and others will be offered. The price will be \$4.95 for two. These can be cut down to fit in the Kinsman composite 50 ton hopper. I have seen these and they are going to be winners.



American Models new hopper car

If you know of any new S products, please contact Don Thompson (2 Roberts Rd., New Brunswick, NJ 08901) or call him after 4 p.m. (201-545-9306). When ordering products or requesting information from any of these manufacturers, please mention that you got your information from the DISPATCH.

READERS REPLY

To Whom It May Concern:

To all the men who attended the "S" Scale get-together on Sunday, February 12, 1984.

I am sorry to report that the assembled Pacific 4-6-2 Running Gear (Frame, Drivers, Rods, Lead, and Trailing Truck), that was on the #1 Roundhouse Track behind the Dockside has disappeared.

If anyone of you can supply any information relating to the above, I would be pleased to hear from you. I can identify the running gear in a number of ways.

If this is returned there will be "No Questions Asked"; if not, it was the first and last S Scale get-together or open house that will be held on the P V & W.

Thank you.

"S"incerely,

John H. Bortz, Sr.
DELAWARE VALLEY
S SCALE SUPPLY
3377 Papermill Road
Huntingdon Valley, PA
19006
(215) 947-2466

Dear Elaine,

I presume I recognize my case in the "Warning on Mid America Scale Models" in the NASG Dispatch, and I appreciate the appearance of that notice -- it may save someone else the same experience.

I have actually seen George Sills' work (he being the name behind Mid America), a C.R.R. of N.J. 2-8-2 he built and it is as beautiful a model as one could wish to see. Unfortunately since then he seems to have become something seemingly like a pathological liar.

Claud Wade has also given me a great deal of help and support in this matter which I am glad to acknowledge in this way, but he cannot make Sills do anything any more than anyone else can. If you think you can have any influence on Sills, do by all means go ahead and try it. Can I help you? Let me know.

It also turns out that the postal service is not interested in anything beyond increasing its statistical files, and has no interest, desire, or authority to prosecute in any such case.

How much even more regrettable it is, then, to lose a good man like John Sudimak.

Tony Perles