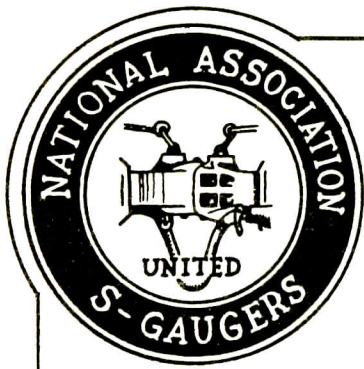
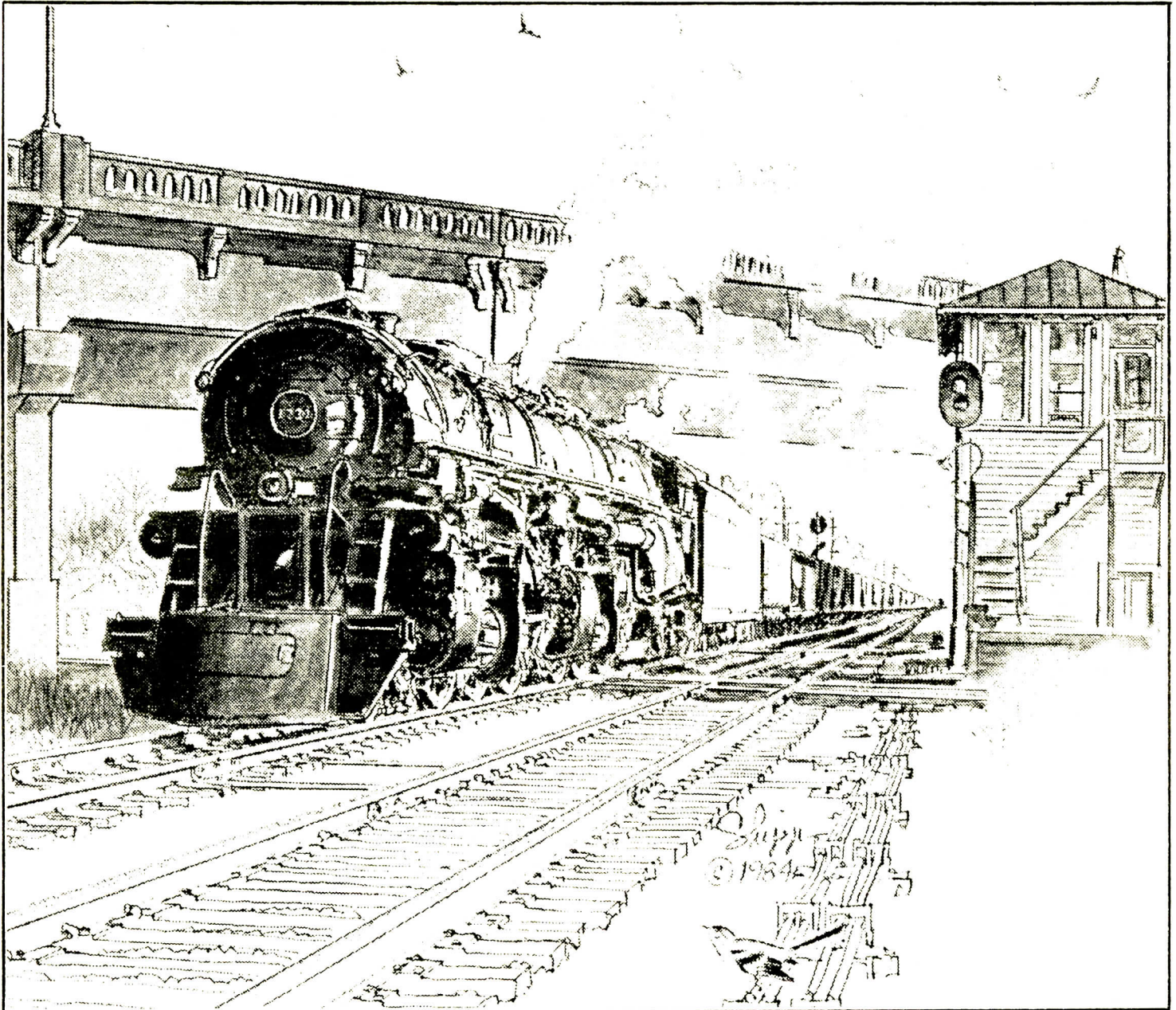




DISPATCH

Volume 8, Number 1

Winter 1985



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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.

NASG membership dues are \$10.00 per membership year, which runs from July 1 of one year to June 30 of the following year. Membership includes the four issues of *DISPATCH* dated during this period, regardless of the date you join. Address all membership applications, renewals, address changes and questions about membership to:

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Syracuse, New York 13207

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EDITORIAL

Changing Standards

by Sam Powell

While most manufacturing firms in the U.S. try diligently to produce new items that make their former products obsolete, and they do it on purpose, model railroading is confronted with just the opposite challenge: how can we improve the product and allow the natural evolutionary improvements in detail, performance, and scale without rendering past products useless?

The fact is, within every major modeling scale there have been several easily identified turning points in growth where the industry and modeling public have had to choose between the past and the future. It's a good bet that these changes were arrived at after much disagreement and heated debate and that the decisions produced some bitterness and animosity. Among the notable successes are (1) the decision to go 2-rail in O scale; (2) the change from link to knuckle couplers in AF; (3) the switch from 3 rail to 2 rail in AF; (4) the switch from AC to DC current in HO (German HO is still AC); (5) the RP 25 wheel in HO; (6) the switch from 25 volts to 12-15 volts as train power. Among the most notable failures have been (1) acceptance of the HO hornhook coupler as the standard coupler; (2) failure to adopt nickel silver rail as the HO standard.

I won't debate these choices with anyone. The point is, success in each instance left some modelers behind, but carried forward all new modelers and old modelers willing to change. Some 3 rail O scale layouts still exist. Some modelers stuck with AC current even in the face of the obvious superiority of DC. The failures, however, held almost everyone back. The HO hornhook coupler has been a disaster for almost 30 years and gets trashed promptly by most serious modelers; and brass track in starter kits is so discouraging for its poor electrical contact as to drive all but the hardiest of souls away from HO, if they don't discover nickel silver rail first.

It is within the context of this truth that the current S Scale "crisis" over standards must be evaluated. I won't discuss details of the differences between old and new standards, but simply relate my experiences with them and offer my opinions about what modelers and manufacturers should do.

I don't put the old S gauge track and wheel standards in the same category with the HO hornhook coupler, but these standards did leave something to be desired. At the time the NASG committee sat down to work out S standards, there were few working layouts and very few locos or rolling stock products being manufactured. Changes at that time would affect just a few people by overall hobby standards. I have seen the new standards at work, and in both appearance and operation they are superior to the old. My recommendation to the manufacturers is obvious: tool up to the new NASG specs. Overland Models is importing everything now with NASG code 110 wheels spaced .795" back to back, and they work well through all but the most extreme of the old track standards. For track manufacturers, look at American Models line of switches. They have produced a switch that works extremely well.

For modelers the only real problem comes about in attempting to interchange equipment. Old gauge wheels will bounce through a new switch frog and new gauge wheelsets will pick the frog on old switches. Old layout operators, such as myself, have two choices for new equipment purchases: (1) regauge the wheel inward .005" (a simple solution usually); or (2) move the frog guard rail .005" closer to the stock rail on your switches and regauge your present rolling stock (my choice). Early S gauge modelers are, by nature, a courageous lot, who thought nothing of regauging wheels from HO to S or from O to S, so pleas of woe in this department fall on insensitive ears here. What you choose to do will be determined by (1) your aesthetic values; (2) how much old equipment you have (I have regauged 100 or so pairs of trucks); (3) how much new equipment you intend to buy;

(4) how important switching operation is to you; (5) the value you place on prototype conformance.

We should feel fortunate that so many new products are coming on the market now and that NASG had the courage to have their new standards finalized before this growth began. Now future converts to S gauge will have one more reason to make the change: wheel and track standards are closer to prototype than in any other gauge, and S gauge still operates better than all with the possible exception of O scale and LBG.

THE COVER

This issue's cover is another in a series of beautiful railroad art drawn by Wayne Shipp. Here the NS junction shudders at the thudding tread of N&W class A #1231 on the old Norfolk Southern Railway crossing in South Norfolk Virginia.

Captain S says . . .

It happens every four years. NASG elections, that is. Be sure to exercise your rights as a member and vote for the candidate of your choice. NASG's new president and other officers will have a big responsibility to take the organization in a positive direction for the future. So, Vote!



1985 "S" GAUGE
"GOLD RUSH" CONVENTION

by Ed Loizeaux

The Bay Area "S" Scalpers (BASS) are pleased to announce the finest "S" gauge convention in the history of mankind. While this introduction may seem a little boastful, we are certain you will agree once our plans are fully understood. Read on, my friend, and please let me know which other convention has ever offered as much.

Thursday, July 4, marks the grand opening of this extravaganza which continues through Sunday, July 7. Sacramento, California, is the locale which is rich in railroad history and modern rail action. Major airlines fly directly to Sacramento and the Amtrak station is across the street from convention headquarters.

Major Events

1. Reno Fun Nite: Only Nevada can offer a variety of activities such as the Virginia & Truckee Railroad (still operating), nightclubs, gambling, and more. Arrive in Reno on Wednesday, July 3, and join with other "S" gaugers in a fun-packed evening including a private dinner, nightclub show, and gaming in a town that never shuts down. The Amtrak station is within walking distance from your hotel and the streamliner departs Reno in the morning. Enjoy breakfast on the train while taking a scenic trip over the Sierra Nevada mountains, through snowsheds (see the turntable inside a snowshed) and many tunnels. Arrive in Sacramento at noon, walk across the street to convention headquarters and enjoy lunch before the convention opens in the afternoon. This event will require advance registration and payment in full no later than May 15, 1985.
2. California Railroad Museum: Golden State taxpayers coughed up \$5 million to construct a modern facility that undoubtedly ranks among the finest display of motive power anywhere. Cab forward arti-

culateds, E units, the C.P. Huntington narrow gauge (not Sn3), inspection pits, a turntable, entire bridges, and more have been beautifully restored, polished to a gleaming state, and displayed in a surrounding of mirrors so that all hard-to-see detail is easily visible. Walk beneath the streamers through the inspection pit for a view most of us have never seen. This museum is across the street from convention headquarters.

3. Southern Pacific Shops: Sacramento is the home of SP's main locomotive rebuilding facility consisting of 198 acres and 30 major buildings. The facility performs heavy maintenance and complete rebuilding of diesel locomotives and also supplies rebuilt components for the remainder of Espee's vast system. These shops rival LaGrange itself in technical capabilities if not in overall physical size. All registered conventioners may attend a walking tour of the Sacramento Locomotive Works, which is located two blocks from convention headquarters.
4. Family Activities: In the tradition of the 1977 San Jose convention, family activities will abound. If the hotel's huge swimming pool is inadequate, the Sacramento River offers boating, canoeing, white-water rafting and --of course--swimming. Restored gold rush towns, shoppes, restaurants, and forts offer many opportunities. Sacramento is California's State capitol and the government buildings are a major tourist attraction. The gold-domed capitol building exemplifies period architecture at its finest and with interior decorating by Walt Disney Enterprises, you'll not be disappointed. Parks, beaches, and all attractions are only a few blocks from convention headquarters.
5. Banquet: Have you ever eaten a gourmet dinner in a roundhouse betwixt the panting behemoth's themselves? Well, yer in fer a treat,

feller!! This meal will go down in the annals of "S" gaugedom as the banquet never to be forgotten. In addition to the remarkable environment, we also promise not to bore you afterwards with endless announcements and awards to the weirdo who handcrafted an exact scale model of a railroad rivet. Instead, a musical talent show consisting of genuine "S" gaugers displaying their "other life" will take place. Sit back, enjoy yourself, and let the good times roll

For more information, please contact our Publicity Chairman after January 1, 1985. At that time, many more details will be available, including costs. Room reservations should be made directly with the hotel.

Ed Loizeaux
Publicity Chairman
P.O. Box 2042
Los Gatos, California 95031

Capitol Plaza Holiday Inn
300 "J" Street
Sacramento, California 95814
(916) 446-0100

PRE CONVENTION FUN!

An action-packed evening in
Reno, Nevada, July 3, 1985

...at MGM Grand Hotel
(20 rooms reserved
for conventioners)
Dinner and a Show --
Hello Hollywood Hello,
the biggest,
the fanciest,
best show going!

Accommodations are \$53 each based on double occupancy. This includes hotel, dinner (plus tax and tip) and the show!

Payment must be received by Ed Loizeaux by March 20. Refunds available. Cancellation date, May 15.

Amtrak travels from Reno to Sacramento from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. across fantastic scenery including the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Lake Tahoe and Donner Lake.

TUNING UP THE AMERICAN MODELS SNAP-LOCK COUPLER

by Sam Powell

For as long as I have been in S gauge (16 years now), the Kadee HO coupler has been the standard coupler for S scale modelers. True, it was a little small, but it was closer to S than HO. They were a little weak (one occasionally pulls apart in S trains) and just a little fussy (those darned springs have a habit of flying into oblivion every now and then). But all in all Kadee couplers were nice to have available, and at a reasonable price. Then Kadee introduced their S gauge coupler, and I was spoiled, but at what a price!

Then American Models introduced their cars equipped with their "snap-lock" couplers. They are accurately scaled and simplicity itself. All that's needed is a centering system and a little tuning to make them operate well. Here's how it's done:

Step 1: Drill a small hole with a number 75 or so drill sideways through the coupler shank midway between the knuckle and the mounting hole.

Step 2: Drill 2 holes in the back of the coupler pocket, one third of the way from each side.

Step 3: Push a 3 inch piece of size 000 spring steel wire through the coupler shank hole and bend each side down so that it forms an upside down letter "U" hanging from the coupler.

Step 4: Swing this wire "U" backwards and feed the springs through the holes in the coupler pockets as you slide the coupler in place. Check the coupler to see if it is centered. It should rest slightly right of center when viewed from the end of the car. Bend one or both of the springs to correct any problems here.

Step 5: Assemble the cover plate with the 2-56 screw from below. On older versions of the snap-lock coupler, I advise enlarging the hole in the cover plate. On newer ones that won't be necessary.

Step 6: Mount the coupler to the car with the cover plate on top.

Step 7: Scrape the left hand face of the knuckle with a hobby knife, removing just a little of the plastic at a time until it couples with a gentle nudge. Don't over do this. Too much and they won't stay coupled under all conditions.

Now you have a scale coupler that looks good, operates well, and is inexpensive. It won't uncouple automatically, but I always found that feature to be more trouble than it's worth, anyway, and finally resorted routinely to 0-5-0 uncoupling even with Kadees. As to the availability of 000 spring steel wire, this is a harpsichord product and available from instrument builders and repairers. I will be happy to let our S gauge supply houses and American Models know where to obtain it for us.

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

by Lewis Rennig, Jr.

Crossing the country underground are miles of pipelines carrying everything from crude oil to liquid nitrogen. Although these pipelines are generally hidden from sight, they do surface at junction points, critical shutdown points or wherever there is a need for a valve or maintenance.

These points where pipes come above ground are most common in industrialized areas where it is necessary to install headers needed to supply many customers from one central location. Junction points, however, are not always needed at such convenient places as industrial parks. The middle of a farmer's field or across the street from someone's house are other common locations.

These valve locations should be surrounded by a six-foot-high chain-link fence and posted on each side with a warning sign telling who owns the facility.

Valves and junction points are not the only areas that require pipes to emerge from below grade. Booster pumps are also required to keep the pipeline pressure up. When modeling a pumping station, the pump can be either exposed to the weather or housed within a small building. These buildings are usually built of block or brick and should be surrounded by a fence as mentioned. Pump houses generally have no windows but should have louvers to provide adequate ventilation to keep the pump cool. Red or yellow strobe lights are often mounted on top to notify maintenance crews of a potential problem. If a building is not available a light can be mounted on a pole next to the pump.

When crossing over rivers a pipeline may be suspended from a nearby bridge, or if none is available, it may even require a bridge of it's own. These bridges are mostly of the suspension type. If the span is short

enough a pole is mounted on either side and a heavy cable suspended between them, then the pipe is supported from loops that are hung from this cable.

Other telltale signs of underground pipelines are 4" pipes painted to represent the item carried by the pipeline (electrical-red, gas or oil-yellow, communication-orange, water-blue and sewer-green). These pipes have about four feet protruding above ground; they are placed directly over the pipeline on either side of highways to warn highway crews of a potential digging hazard.

Come to think of it, adding a pipeline isn't that much work. Maybe I'll feed my next cement plant by natural gas instead of coal. Now, what to do with those extra coal hoppers.

DEADLINE NOTICE

The deadline for material for the Spring '85 issue of the DISPATCH is April 15.

SHORT 'n' EASY

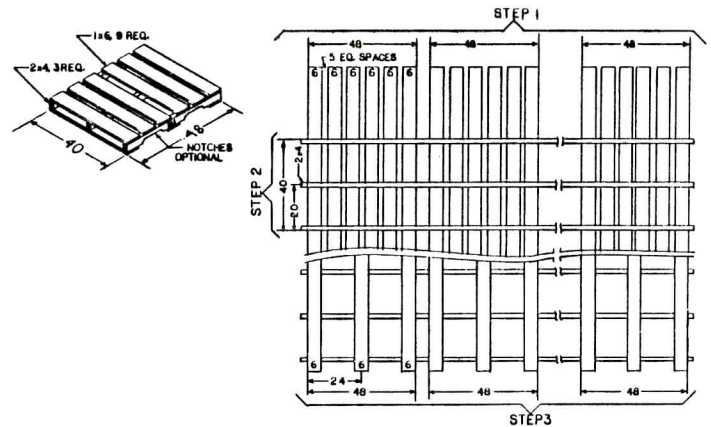
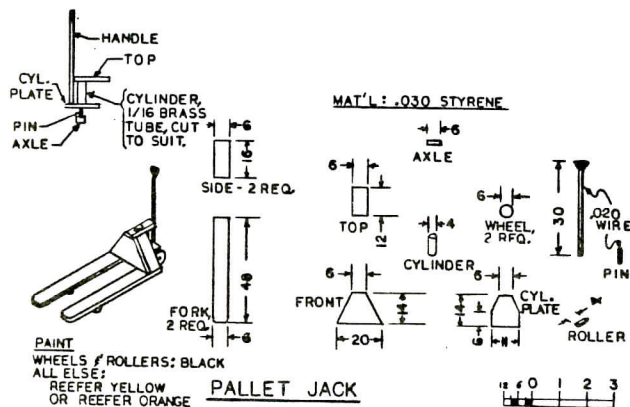
by Kent Singer

PALLET JACKS

Pallet jacks are as common on loading docks as crates and skids are. They come in many variations of fork length and width, and housing heights. This one is representative of the lot and is quick and easy to build.

For material, I used the tabs that come on bread bags, but any .030" styrene is suitable. The wheels may be sliced from 1/16" rod or tubing, or punched out of sheet stock with the right size punch. The cylinder can be tubing, rod or a piece of dowel.

Start by fastening the sides to the front. Then add the cylinder plate. Let dry. The sides should overhang the top and bottom of the front slightly, sand flush, add the top and forks and let dry again. Sand the top to match the side slopes, add the cylinder and drill the holes for the wire handle and pin in the cylinder plate and drill the pin hole in the axle. Fasten the wheels to the axle and pin the axle/wheel assembly to the cylinder plate. Add the handle and then fasten the rollers to the forks. Paint as noted, or any other color you've seen pallet jacks painted.



Pallets are everywhere...on loading docks, in empty boxcars, in ditches and just about any place there's an industry. Luckily, they are easy to model and can be made quickly by the sheet method.

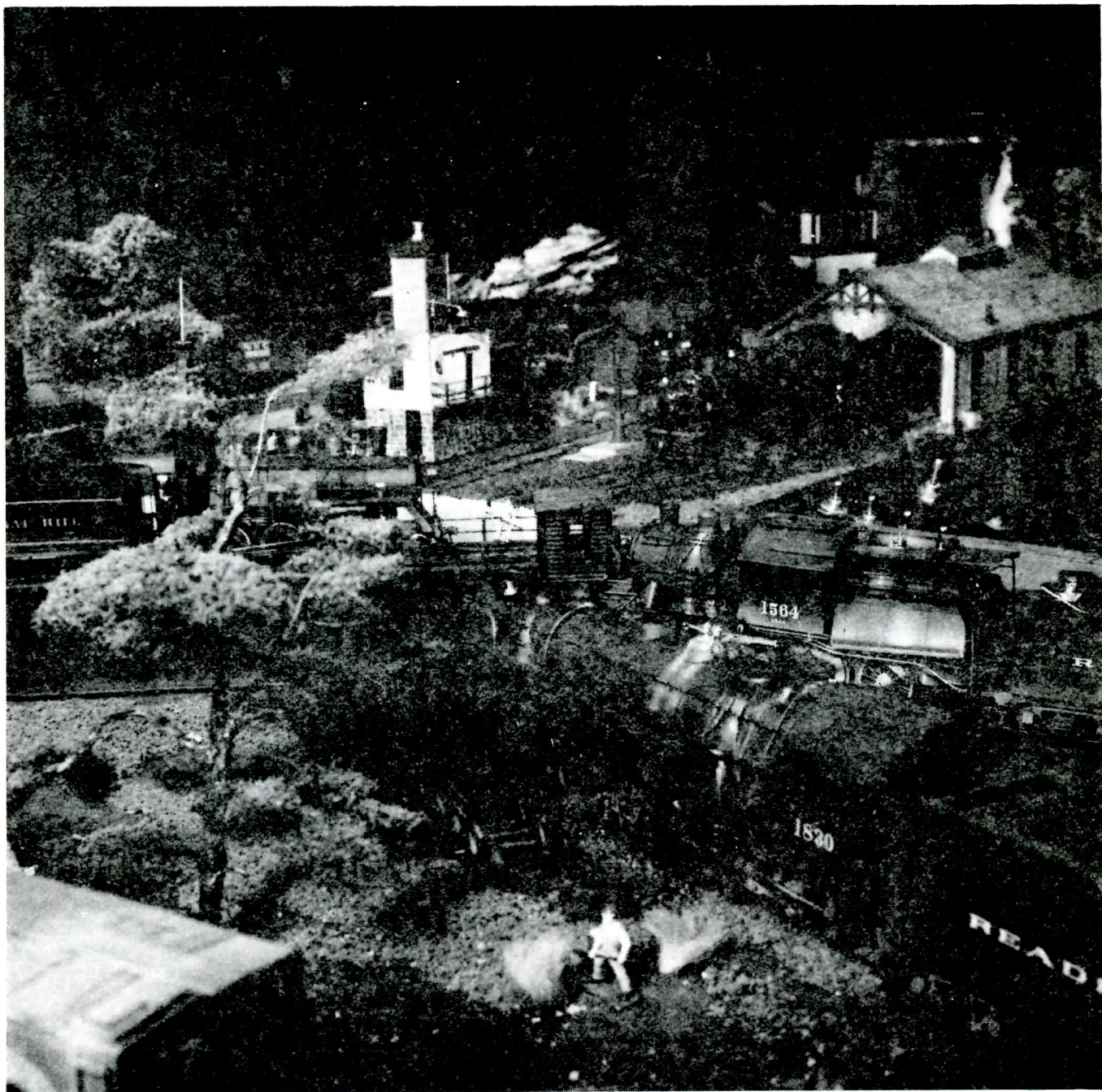
The ratio of materials is about nine 1x6's for each three 2x4's, or 3:1. The length of the stripwood determines the sheet size and hence the amount of wood.

STEP 1: Start by taping the ends of the 1x6's to the work surface in groups of six boards per 48 scale inches as shown in the diagram, the number of groups depending on the length of the 2x4's.

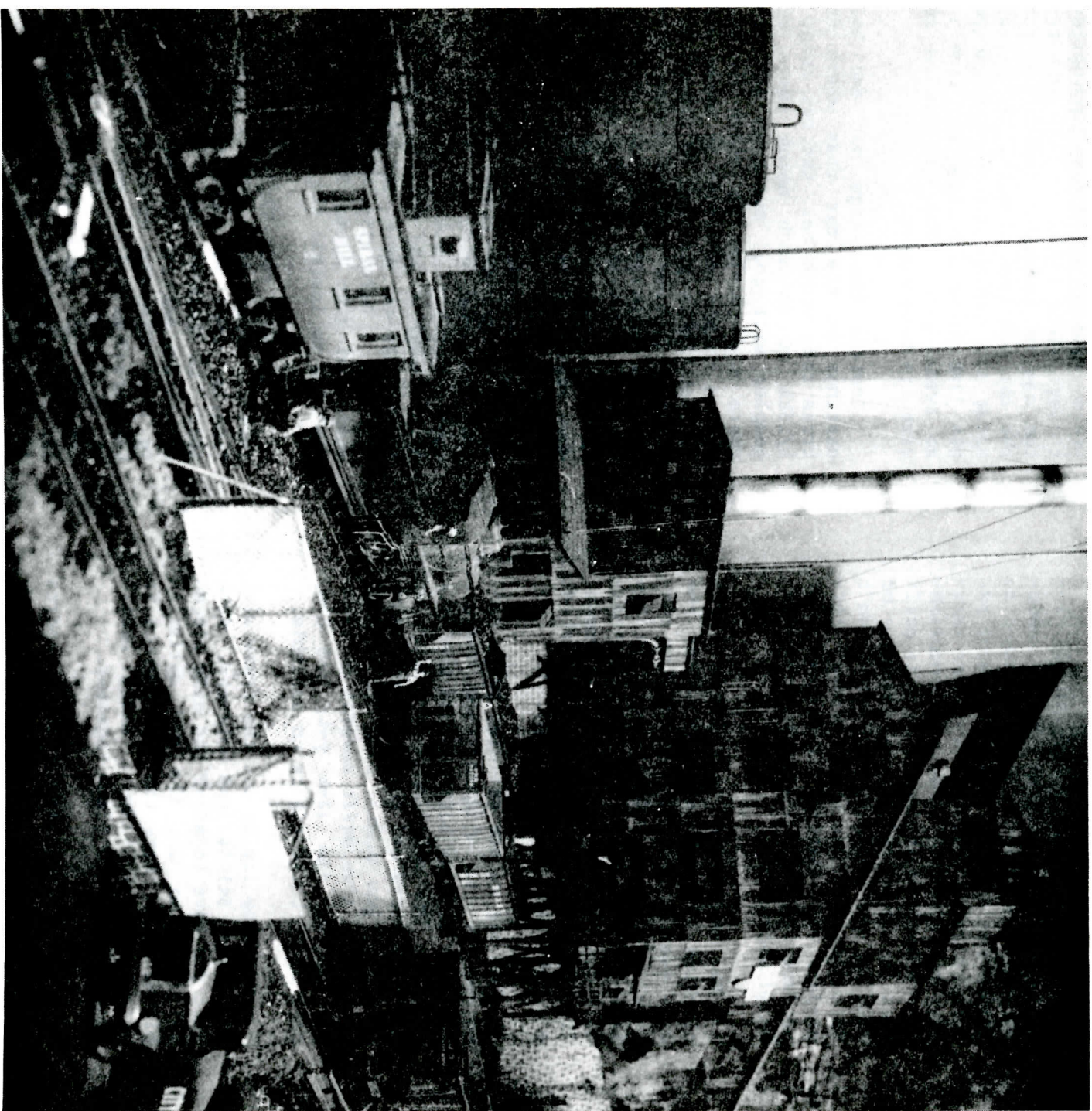
STEP 2: Glue the 2x4's across the 1x6's in groups of three. The outside edges of the group are 40" apart and the middle 2x4 is centered.

STEP 3: Glue 1x6's across the 2x4's in groups of three with the outer boards superimposed over the first and sixth 1x6's on the bottom layer. The middle board is centered.

When the glue is dry, slice the pallets out of the resulting sheet with a sharp knife and sand the edges flush. Notches may be cut in the outer 2x4's (or filed) but they aren't strictly necessary. Weather the pallets to varying degrees using the sludge at the bottom of your brush cleaning bottle.



Frank Titman's Spiral Hill R.R. just keeps getting better and better. The above dramatic shots show the Red Dot Mine located at Crystal Falls. This is a kit bashed version of Lehigh Valley Model's mine kit. The mine also features one of Frank's patented operating loading devices. The photo to the right shows the Spiral Hill locomotive shops. It's amazing how many locomotives Frank can build in such a short period of time.



AN EASY-TO-BUILD FLATCAR

by James Soberman

Editor's Note: With the introduction of so much beautiful RTR S gauge equipment lately it would be easy to forget the scratch builders among us. Scratch building not only offers variety, but yields a sense of accomplishment unmatched otherwise, and is still seen by us as a primary identity of many of our readers. If you haven't tried scratch building before, this project is a natural first, yet will produce results to satisfy even seasoned modelers.

How would you like to build an old-time flatcar patterned after the cars used around the turn of the century? If your modeling era is the late 1930's through the 1950's, these cars can be used as M.O.W. equipment. If you're modeling the pre all-steel era, this car will fit right in.

The car we are building has a prototype on the Virginia and Truckee Railroad and was built around the late 1890's. The model will be built up board by board and you can add as much detail as you wish. This car is easy to build. I've built several of these cars during the last year and they take about three nights to assemble.

Start by laying out the frame with the 6x6's, 6x12's, and bolsters. Note that you have to miter the side pieces in order to set the end sills in place. Make sure that each piece is placed square. Use a small square when putting the frame together.

Cement the queen post supports across the frame. Note that you have to miter the ends to fit. Use a square to ensure proper placement. Drill the supports for the queen posts and cement the posts in place as shown in the diagram.

Take pieces of 4x4 and cement them to the frame 8'9" from the ends. This is a compromise to model-building which will make it easier for the trucks to swing on the finished model.

Now you have to decide in what era you wish this car to represent and the use this car is going to be put to. These decisions will dictate the brake system you will install. The "K" type brake system would be appropriate through about 1940. An "AB" type system can be installed indicating that the car had been rebuilt. If you are using the car in M.O.W. service you can just place a through air line and no brake gear. The car can be set with its hand brakes.

Install the large nut and bolt castings on the car ends where the truss rods would be. Cut out about a 1/16th of an inch notch where the coupler will go. Build up the area where the coupler is going to seat with a couple of pieces of scrap wood so that the coupler may be pinned into place. I like to use Kadee #5-10 couplers because they are easy to assemble and install. Pin the coupler in place with a couple of small cut down brads (nails) or sewing needles.

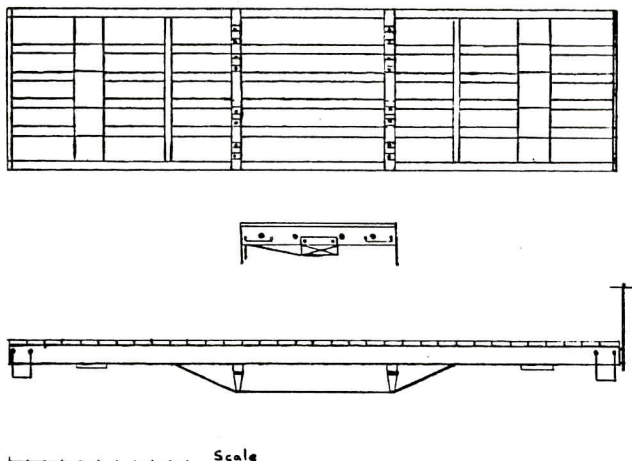
Using a piece of wire, bend a cut lever and cement it in place on the coupler pocket with a little ACC cement. You may want to use an eyelet at the edge of the car to support the end of the cut lever and add a little strength. Carefully place the end steps and grab irons in place. It's now time to install the truss rods.

I have a relatively easy way to install truss rods. Cut a length of fishing line or upholstery thread about 12 inches long. Cut a notch across the entire width of the bolster in line with the queen posts. Wrap the thread around the bolster and knot it in place. Seal the knot with a drop of ACC. Next, pass the line under the 4x4, over the queen posts, under the 4x4 and tie in place on the opposite bolster. Seal the knot and the joints at the queen posts with ACC. If you used a braided line, seal them with a little clear nail polish which will give it the illusion of metal when painted.

You may want to add other details at this time. Stake pockets, coupler pocket details, tack boards, and other hardware may be desirable.

Paint the frame and the trucks at this point. Set these parts aside and let them dry.

Take the 2x12's and cut them to the full width of the car. Stain them with a thin wash of Floquil Grimy Black or Floquil Driftwood Stain. Let them dry and then cement them in place. Letter the model and it's ready to go.



PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

by Don Thompson, Chairman

50th ANNIVERSARY OF S. Tom Coughlan has agreed to give us copies of his notes on the History of S seminar that he gave at the NASG national convention at Woburn, MA, in 1982. We may also be getting a copy of the video tape of the seminar. We still need a writer for either MR or RMC on this topic. Sam Powell has agreed to one, but the publishers will want a different writer for the other magazine.

ADVERTISEMENTS. The layouts for the ad to Model Railroader have been completed. These should appear in the March or April issue. The possibility of putting an NASG membership ad in the S-Gaugian is being explored. This will be different from the MR ad, which deals primarily with S promotion. If anyone has any ideas for an NASG ad, please send them to me.

ALL-GAUGE-SHOWS. Dave Held of the Southeastern Michigan S Gaugers has sent in a price to send their club's corner sections (code 125), built to the NASG proposed modular standards, to the 50th Anniversary NMRA national convention held in Milwaukee, Aug. 1-4. If any other club has been in contact with the NMRA and has space for a modular or sectional layout, contact me and we will see if we can help. If any club is planning on attending any all-gauge national show like the NMRA (TCA or TTOS) with a display in either '85 or '86, please contact me and we will see if NASG Promotions Committee can budget some money to help defray expenses.

NASG DISPLAY BOOTH. We now have several bids on an NASG table covering to be used at shows to promote S and NASG. We are hoping to get a wide angle lens, a timer and an inexpensive rear projection booth to show the NASG slide show continuously at the display table. This will be available to all clubs or individuals to be used at shows.

NASG BUTTON. Bill Geracci has sent me a sample button "Throw the switch to S". We may be getting these made for members to wear at shows. Bill is putting together a promotions package about the current NASG brochure. Does your club use these to promote S and NASG at shows?

CLUB DIRECTORY. Last month letters went out to S gauge clubs asking them to fill out an enclosed pre-addressed post card for MR's club directory to be published in May. The promotions committee felt it would be good to have a listing of all known S clubs included. If I missed your club, I am sorry. If your club is interested in hearing from us about similar promotions going on, please drop me a line.

S IN THE MEDIA. A tip of the hat to Jesse Bennett for the layout article in the February MR, to Bill Geracci for his article on scratch building a GP-30 in Jan. '85 Mainline Modeler, and to Sam Powell for letting MR tape his layout for a future video layout tour. Efforts like these are probably the most effective way to promote S modeling.

THE USE OF PAINT MASKS

By Kent L. Singer

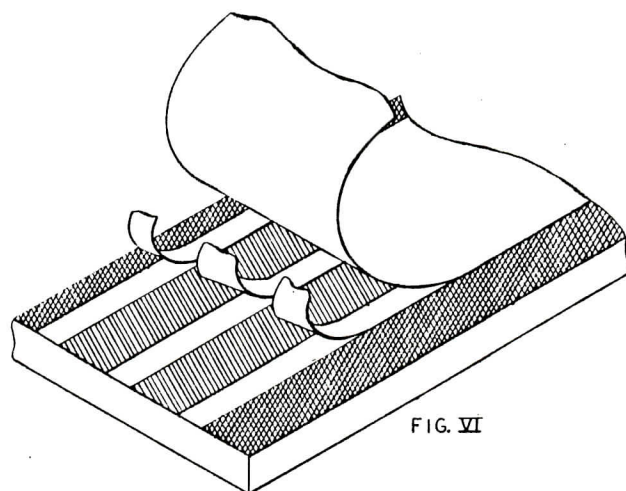
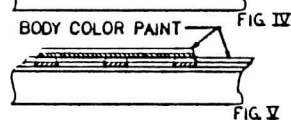
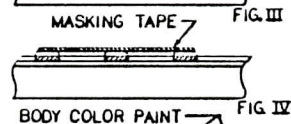
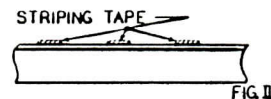
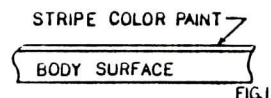
The use of spray paints or an air brush in model painting has long been appreciated. The application of masking tape to obtain multicolor paint schemes has been around equally as long. The purpose of this article is to point out some of the more specialized uses of masks.

With the abundance of diesels and passenger cars now on the market, quite a bit of discussion is heard about the availability of various decal stripes. Here is a method I've developed to avoid the use (or lack) of decals. The system is based on the use of Chartpak brand tape which can be found in art supply stores. This tape is available in a large number of thin widths.

First, the body is painted with the stripe color (Fig. 1). Then, a week or two later (the paint must be dry) the thin width tape is applied as a stripe mask. This can be repositioned, added to, trimmed or generally played around with until you're satisfied with the look and placement of it (Fig. 2).

Occasionally the need arises for a herald with a background in a size, or color, that just isn't available. However, if the proper sized "plain Jane" white herald is on hand, some quick work with the airbrush is all that's needed.

Now heralds with backgrounds typically are oval, square, diamond shaped, round or something relatively simple. Stick a good sized piece of masking tape on a piece of clean glass and draw the background outline on it. Then cut away the inside portion. Lay the glass over the herald and check to see how close you came. After two or three tries you should have an acceptable mask. Carefully remove it from the glass so as not to distort it, place it on the appropriate spot on the model, mask adjacent areas and spray on the background color.

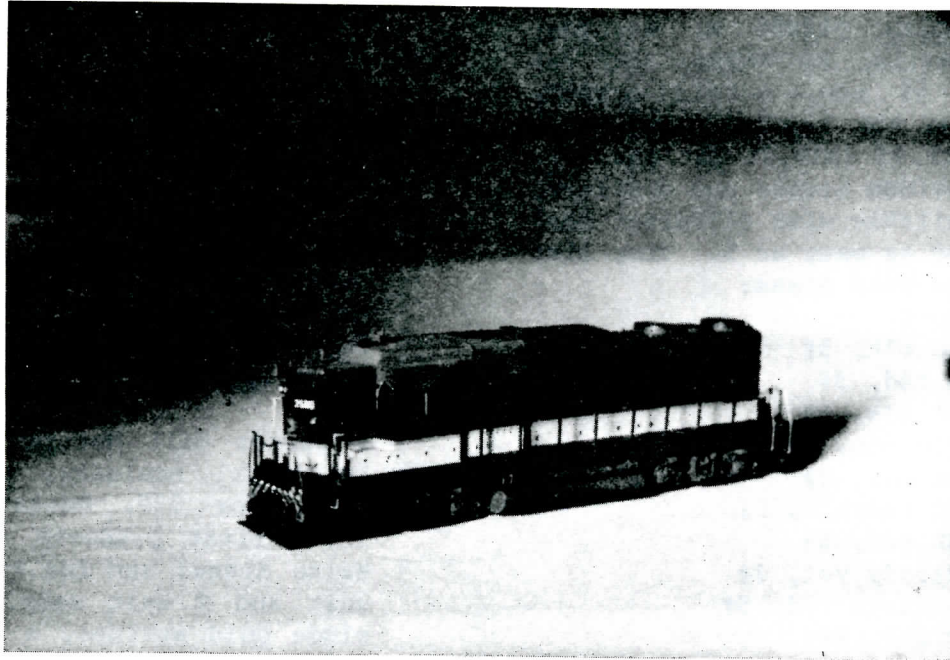


Spray on the next color (Fig. 3). This may be a between the stripes color or as in NYC Lightening Stripes or lightweight passenger car window bands, or merely a second stripe color. Again, let the paint dry thoroughly. Mask the second area where required (Fig. 4) and spray on the body color paint (Fig. 5). Let dry and peel off the masks (Fig. 6).

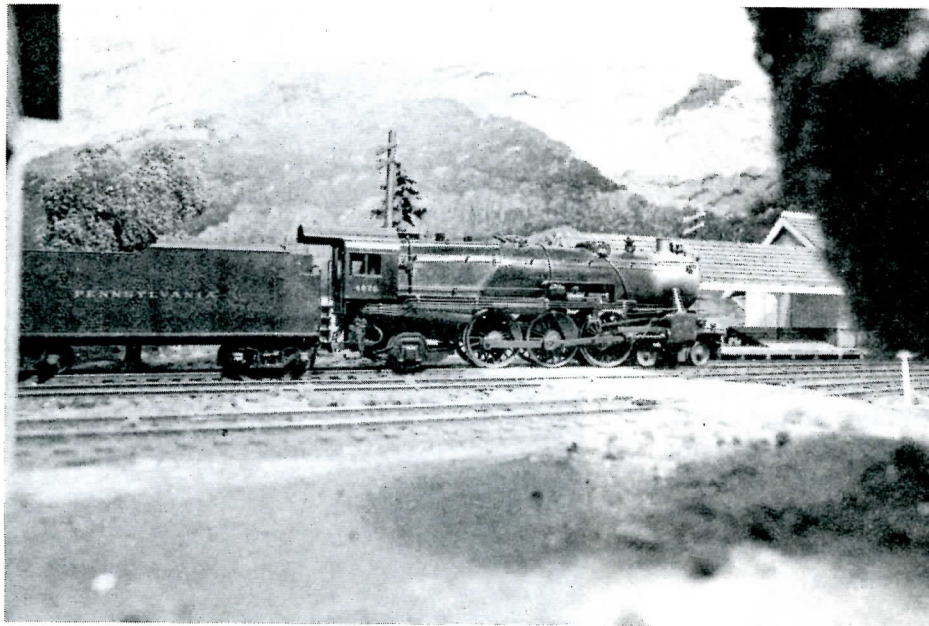
You may want to try this on some scrap first (like the 4' section lift from changing an FP-7 to an F-7) to find out where the problems will creep in. Also, it works best if the colors get progressively darker.

Many roads had a basic herald that had a background color in good years that was eliminated during WWII or in lean years (due to labor cutbacks). An example is the NYC oval which had a black background that disappeared and then showed up in red above diesel pilots.

PICTURE**S**QUE



Two prize winners from the '84 convention in Buffalo. Above is Bill Geracci's 1st place winner, a scratch-built GP30, and below is the editorial consultant's K-4 (not K-5).



TRADE NEWS AND VIEWS

by Don Thompson

AMERICAN MODELS (22055 W. Brandon, Farmington Hills, MI 48024) has released the 55 ton, outside-braced, two-bay, open top hopper. These are priced at \$16.95 (\$18.95 for the Peabody) and include trucks and couplers. They are available with different road numbers, some as many as 5. They list the following road names:

- #300 undec
- #301 C&O blk, 5#
- #302 WM red, 3#
- #303 B&O blk, 5#
- #304 Erie blk, 5#
- #305 N&W blk, 5#
- #306 NYC red/blk, 5#
- #307 PRR red, 5#
- #308 Peabody yel, 3#
- #309 Southern red, 5#
- #310 UP blk, 5#
- #311 SP red, 5#
- #312 DRG&W red, 3#
- #313 VIRG blk, 3#

I have seen these and they are very nice with separate ladders, centersill and brake details. Ron also has come out with a craftsmen style reefer kit. These are similar to the Kinsman kits of old. The price is \$16.95 and they use sides by Gene Walp. Ron has just received his double-slip turnouts.

John Hall of DIAMOND STATE MODELS (1206 Stinsford Rd., Newark, DE 19713) called to tell me of his new MOW speeder based on the Buda prototype, popular since the 40's. These come fully assembled. The price is \$12.95 for the undec (DSM #20) and \$13.95 for the yellow painted (DSM #21) version. These will be limited to 100 units.

I received Jeff Wilson's new 1985 S Scale Catalog for HOQUAT HOBBIES (P.O. Box 253, Dunellen, NJ 08812). The price is \$3.50 (for an extra \$1 you get five issues of his newsletter) for this 60-page Scyclopedia. This is his fifth catalog and by far the nicest. The biggest change is the category formatting (e.g., locomotives, pass cars, etc.). They also have some new Gene Walp sides, 36' reefers Columbia Soup, Evansville Packing, Roberts Meats and Swartzchild & Sulzberger. The 40' reefers are Gerber baby food and College Inn.

S gauger Bill Morris has started an 'S' decal business, N.E. PROTOTYPES (P.O. Box 537, Rutland, MA 01543). Their first products are a Boston & Maine diesel set for the GP-7 or 9, E unit and F unit sets. The sets include gold stripes, a 4 color herald, clear and black numbers for number boards or silver numbers for the E and F units front end number boards. These sets are run in small lots and cost \$6.00 each ppd. I have seen the GP sets and they are nicely done. Bill also sells the correct accupaint for the B&M diesel at \$2.50 per bottle.



READERS REPLY

ORIENTAL LIMITED's last dealer newsletter said the NW-2 will arrive this month.

OVERLAND MODELS (R.R. 2, Box 445, Muncie, IN 47302) is expecting the USRA 2-8-2 Mikado about the time this magazine is being sent to you. Tom had to increase his order from 100 to 150 units due to the demand for the steam engine. The next project is the FA-2's and they are now taking \$50 deposits. Also, 25 units of the Pennsy antenna version of the FA-2 are being made for all of our keystone fans. Tom also tells us he is about out of the GP-38-2's and the E units with the PRR E-8 now gone and only a few of the rest. He is now working on the next steam engine and will announce it when the remaining Mikes are sold (15 left 1-15-85).

Tom Nimelli sent me some info on QUALITY PRODUCTS CO. (P.O. Box 2202, Castro Valley, CA 94546). They produce a line of neon signs usable in S. The signs are premounted on 2"x2" (10'8"x 10'8") windows. They have both one part signs (\$9.50) and two part signs (\$18.00). The flasher units are extra. Send 25 cents for a catalog. From what I have seen, I will be purchasing a nice little two part White Castle sign (my favorite spot).

In their last dealer brochure, SUNSET MODELS (138 W. Campbell Ave., Campbell, CA 95008) has promised an inexpensive steam engine in 1985 (about \$300). They did not say what it was, but it may be the Russian Decapod mentioned in the MR Feb. ad.

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.

Dear Elaine,

Lee McCarty of the Cuyahoga Valley S Gaugers has written a letter on why his club elected to use code 148 rail on their portable club layout. His reason for doing so, the desire to run American Flyer as well as scale equipment, is an excellent one, and I don't see how anyone could quarrel with it.

I greatly regret, however, Mr. McCarty's attempt to contrast this approach to a display layout with a false image which he attempts to pin on the NASG modular committee's proposed standards, saying that these standards specify code 100 and hence are for "scale" only. This is not true and never has been. While the wording in the section on track has been revised a few times in an attempt to satisfy all S gaugers, this has been only a shift in emphasis; the fundamental principle has always been that while "scale" must be able to run on a module, if you want to make your modules able to run American Flyer as well, please do so -- and use whatever rail size you like.

Both the Southeastern Michigan S Gaugers and the Heartland (Kansas City) Rails have built complete modular layouts which comply 100% with the committee's proposed standards, which can run American Flyer on the outside track of all modules, and in fact can run AF on all tracks of most modules. Those few modules which are scale-only on the inside track could simply be left out if either of those groups were invited to bring their modules to a set-up where it was required that AF be able to run on all tracks. Both of these clubs use code 126 rail for their hi-rail track, but it's true that this requires a very small spikehead (and Miller tiestrip is questionable) to clear the AF flanges. For those who would feel more comfortable with a slightly higher rail, code 148 would be the perfect choice for an NASG module.

If a "scale fanatic" really did tell Mr. McCarty that his code 148 rail looked greatly oversize, that person should be advised to look at his own "scale" wheel flanges:

they're roughly twice the size of what a true scale reduction of a real wheel flange would be. Consider this: Code 100 is generally accepted as the unofficial standard rail for HO modeling; code 148 is S represents a rail less than one scale inch higher than what code 100 represents in HO. (The figures are 9.5 and 8.7 inches respectively.) With the sides darkened and the track properly ballasted, code 148 should produce a very realistic S gauge track.

There is one other point in Mr. McCarty's letter which I must take exception to: that is his use of the term "modular" to describe his club's layout. It is a fine club display layout and it is certainly sectional and portable, but the individual sections are not modules. A true module is interchangeable with any other module built to the same standards. If the Michigan club assembles its modules in the same configuration twice in a row, it's sheer coincidence; it's neither necessary nor intended. An 8-foot module can be pulled out of the Kansas City modular set-up and one 8-foot or two 4-foot modules from Michigan plugged in. Real modules are interchangeable; the sections of the Cuyahoga Valley layout are not. It detracts from the modular movement when others try to create the effect of having joined the movement by using the terminology but ignoring the fundamental idea.

We have recently read about the "family" of S gaugers and it's a concept I can fully appreciate. Probably about one-quarter of the enjoyment I get out of this hobby comes from making trains run; the other three-quarters comes from getting together with people I've come to know and like--in my club and from all over the U.S. and Canada. I would ask you then, what could better serve as tangible evidence of our family than operating S

gauge railroad made up of modules, individually-built and club-built, from all over the continent? I look forward to this at future NASG conventions, NMRA conventions, and anywhere else that model railroaders may congregate.

If the idea of an NASG module with code 148 rail opens new possibilities to hi-rail operators, I suggest they contact either Mr. McCarty or Mr. Earl Eshleman about the availability of code 148 rail and turnouts. Write to me for the dimensional and electrical specifications.

Tom Hawley
Modular Standards
Development Committee

Dear Elaine,

I just thought that I would take a couple of minutes and let you know that I've noticed a change in the DISPATCH. I am particularly pleased to see it branching out, so to speak, into a broader scope. Sam's article on scratch building a locomotive framework is a good example. This is the type of piece that has a very limited appeal to larger model railroading publications, but belongs in the DISPATCH. I was glad to see it.

Frankly, I have thought about scratch building a locomotive for quite a long time and the thought of building the frame had held the project back. The idea of filing all that brass was a good deterrent. Today I just finished getting the frame built and some of the kinks out of it. Before too long I'll have the American built that I want.

Keep up the good work.

James M. Soberman