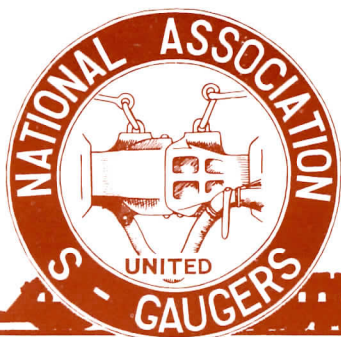




October 1988

Vol. XI No. 4

DISPATCH

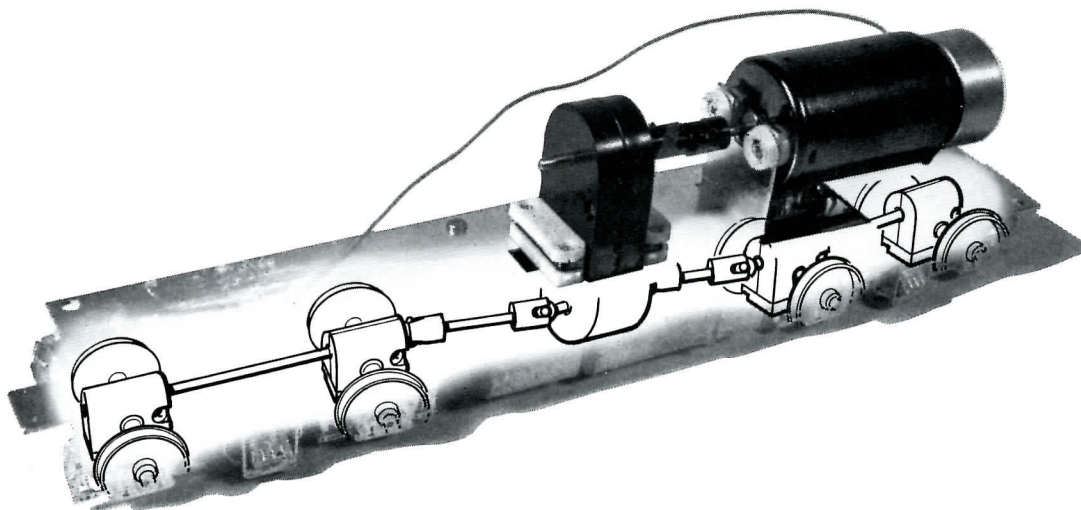
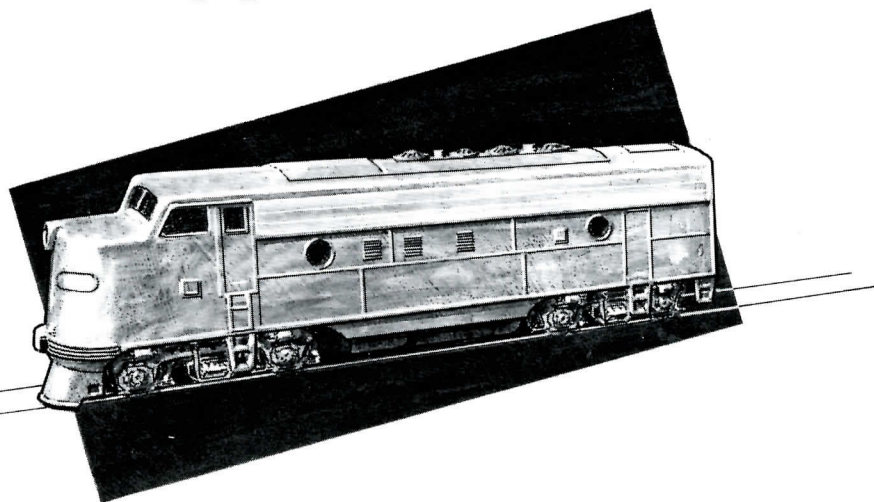


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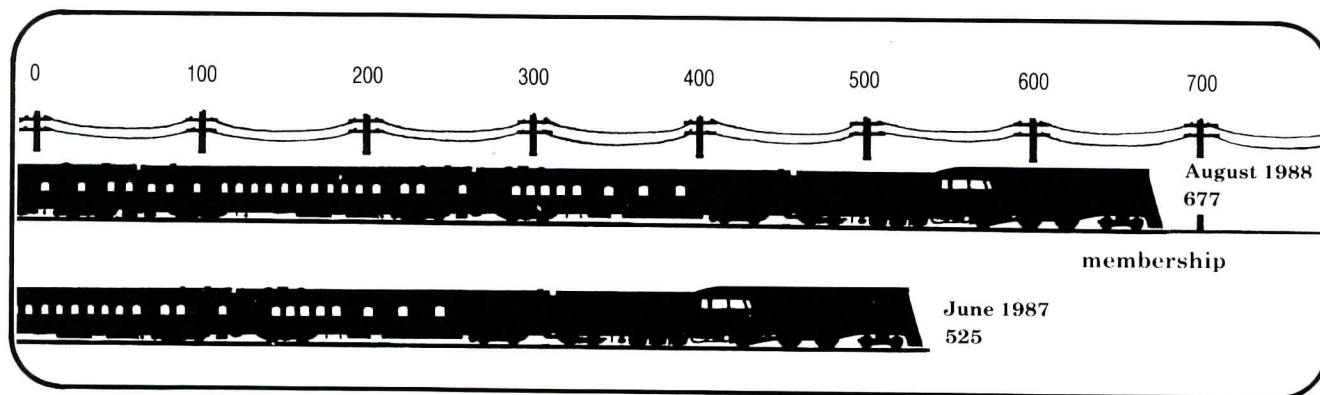
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DISPATCH	ORDER BOARD	Vol. XI No. 4	October 1988
Official Publication of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of S GAUGERS The DISPATCH, published bimonthly, welcomes art, photographs, letters, cartoons, articles, and other S-gauge- related materials contributed by the membership. Send them to the Editor: Dick Karnes 4323 86th Ave. SE Mercer Island, WA 98040 NASG dues are \$17 yearly from July through June, including all issues of the DISPATCH for the membership year irrespective of enrolment date. All applications, renewals, membership questions, and address changes should be directed to: NASG Inc. c/o Michael R. Ferraro 280 Gordon Road Matawan, NJ 07747 All rights reserved, including reproduction in whole or part, without permission of National Association of S Gaugers Inc.	Editorial Dick Karnes 4 Letters 4 New Members 7 NEW BRUNSWICK '88 — The NASG National Convention Convention Overview Dick Karnes 8 Model Contest Winners Kent Singer 14 Manufacturer News 22 REVIEWER'S WORKBENCH 23 President's Message Ed Loizeaux 26 Helper Service DISPATCH art staff 27 Modular Standards Committee Report Don DeWitt 28 SHORT 'n' EASY Kent Singer 30		
	STAFF Dick Karnes Editor Bob Jackson Associate Editor Silas Kayle Club News Tom Nimelli AF Editor Kent Singer Contributing Editor Jerry Perkins Artist Bob Werre Photography Pete Mihelich Publisher		
The deadlines for articles are the 15th of Mar., May, July, Sept., Nov., and Jan. for issues dated May, July, Sept., Nov., Jan., and Mar. respectively.	COVER Neil Redding's interlocking tower clinched the Amateur Scratchbuilt Structures category at the 1988 NASG Convention in New Brunswick, NJ. It is meticulously detailed, including flares in the box and hand-painted clocks made of aspirin tablets! <i>Photo by Bob Werre.</i>		



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EDITORIAL

Lucky Number 13

This is my thirteenth issue as editor, and I'm having a ball doing it. The support I've been getting from the membership, the officers, and the advertisers has been tremendous. **KEEP THOSE LETTERS, NOTICES, ARTICLES, AND PHOTOS COMING.**

Pete Mihelich and I have been trying different ways of putting the magazine together, and we're going to continue to give you the print quality introduced in the last issue.

Briefly, here's how we do it. I format the text on my personal computer and send sized photo orders to Bob Werre. He gives me properly-sized prints. I make a floppy disk of all the text (including captions, table of contents - etc.) and send it to Pete. He runs my floppy text into his computerized typesetter and produces a "galley" of properly-formatted professional-quality text.

Then, using the galley text, I lay out ("paste up") a mock-up of the issue on used newsprint sheets, blocking out the spaces for the photos. (This is the hard part — getting everything to fit in a multiple of four pages.) I key the photos to their respective locations in the text and label their backs with captions. In addition, I proofread the text and mark corrections in red for Pete. I then send him the photos, figures, and the newsprint pasteups.

Pete does the final pasteup, based on my newsprint layout, with corrected text and the photos and figures I've sent him. This goes fast, and he's able to cycle a proof copy by me and still get the issue in the mail in about 17 days.

As you can see, there are many steps in the process, but it's all fun. Thank you all for your support.

Letters . . .

We print all letters sent to us in the LETTERS column, with the following exceptions:

Business-oriented communications

Manufacturer news (which winds up in the "Manufacturer News" column)

Manufacturer feedback on review preprints (which may result in corrected or elaborated information in the "Reviewer's Workbench" column)

Bare-naked praise letters

We edit or excerpt some letters because of grammar, spelling, length, and/or harshness. Edited-out sentence fragments are replaced by ellipses (. . .). Word substitutions such as "you" for "he" or "the locomotive" for "it" are surrounded by square brackets ([]). Sometimes we use paraphrasing to smooth out grammar or syntax.

Criticism of Manufacturers

The DISPATCH is, and will continue to be, a service to the NASG membership. We coordinate closely with manufacturers whose products we review **before** we go to print, so that they are not surprised and have time to take action on any problems. This helps the manufacturers and the membership alike. Our manufacturers are all willing to make good on problems with their merchandise.

If you have complaints, we think it's more productive for you to communicate with the manufacturer before deciding to send a letter to us. However, we do print such letters, as they contain valid points. When appropriate, we follow them with clarifying remarks.

Our equipment reviews emphasize value for the money. Minor detailing anomalies or omissions on "entry-level" items (like \$130 R-T-R diesels and \$20 plastic kits) will not detract from an overall favorable impression of a reviewed product.

On the other hand, \$600 locomotives and \$100 cars are expected to be near-perfect, and are therefore examined against substantially higher standards. There is nothing more frustrating than having to do surgery on a brass import to fix a \$10 manufacturer's shortcut — or finding fairly gross detail departures from the prototype configuration — or having to go through the bother of returning it for replacement when it should have been inspected in the first place.

So, NASG members, please do your part to help our manufacturers help us. And we will continue to work with them without compromising your interests.

Dick James

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LETTERS . . .

Editor:

I don't know if this is news, but I discovered something recently that your readers might like to know. The local art supply or office supply store might carry "Chartpak" markers. They are available in many, many colors. I find "Beaver Brown" handy for staining scratched ties or any small area to be painted dark brown.

John H. Long Jr.

Editor:

I would like to express my deep appreciation and honor to the membership of the NASG for the award I received at the 1988 Convention. As recipient of the Bernie Thomas Award, I have joined a very fine group of men and women. It is very gratifying to be appreciated for the work that I have done for the NASG and I plan to continue working just as intensely.

I would also like to thank two very special people who should partially share this honor. Evon, my wife, and Don Thompson, my friend. Thank you Evon for your understanding, encouragement, and patience. Thank you Don. You have been my spark plug.

Don DeWitt

Editor:

I have been reading the back issues of the NASG **DISPATCH** . . . , and your article on "A Good 5-Cent Cigar" caught my attention.

I wanted you to know that I wholeheartedly agree with you, especially in regard to the tank cars and heavyweight passenger cars. These were some of the most common sights on the rails some years ago and yet they seem to have been ignored by all the current manufacturers. I wonder why??

As you know, I am a NYC fan to a degree and am also a Southern Railway fan. However, don't you think it is about time some of the other roads got some attention? Personally, I think the manufacturers have about driven the Pennsy and NYC into the ground and broken off the stick. There were and still are many good roads running the rails, which is more than can be said for either the Pennsy or NYC, so why not cater to some of the rest of the country?

Reference the articles regarding lack of input to the manufacturers on just what we would like to see forthcoming. I have been quiet for

years now, as I had no . . . specific desires regarding forthcoming products. I will say this though: I bought one of the [Sunset] "Big Boys" and it wouldn't even fit on the track much less run. I had to regauge all the wheel sets and remanufacture most of the running gear before I could sell it. I overlooked that one as a mistake and bought the [Sunset] Challenger only to find the same . . . manufacturing and marketing negligence. I won't overlook it again. There is no need in that manufacturer asking for input, much less an output to me again.

There is a market in S for brass, and I think it is well taken care of for the moment. However, there is a saturation point also . . . that is fast approaching, if not already here. Ron Bashista has done a great job in plastic and I hope he can continue to do so. I am glad to hear that Charlie Sandersfeld is going into plastic for his forthcoming heavyweights, and in kit form to keep the cost down. This makes me wonder if brass is the only metal the engine makers can work with, and if ready-to-run is the only way they can make them?? The old Varney kits of years ago were really nice, and so are the S&P (Rex) kits.

I think you are doing a superb job with the **DISPATCH**; keep it up.

Russ Mobley

[Russ was NASG General Director from 1965 to 1970.]

Editor:

Regarding Mr. David Engle's letter, Aug. 1988 **DISPATCH** Vol. XI #3:

Early in 1987, after persistent requests by many S scalers, we agreed to design and produce a mechanism for the existing Enhorning/Wabash Valley F unit shells. Because we were planning to complement our steam models with several diesels, we set forth to produce components that could not only power the WV shell, but retrofit every S scale diesel now in the market. As you all know, some

past models suffered from poorly-designed drive trains. Based on the outstanding success of our PA conversion units, we, along with SouthWind and NWSL, put together a basic mechanism.

However, we made a serious mistake. We rushed the product to market and the first 15-20 units had problems. Boy . . . did we hear about it. Especially from friends. But, we have been dealing with all complaints, making adjustments, and in one case refunding the money.

If it seems like I'm writing to defend a bad product, not so! The facts are that the improved units can challenge any diesel in the marketplace on performance. But let me share with you what the problems were and how we solved them.

NWSL didn't realize that there was an NASG standard for wheel sets.

Code 110 wheels in rigid side frames won't track well.

Electrical pickup is poor in unequalized trucks.

So we:

Double-check all wheelsets to NASG standards prior to rail testing.

Reworked the bolsters to allow sideframe movement, thus allowing equalization and better electrical pickup.

This spring in Cleveland we ran a stock unit back and forth through Jack Sudimak's switching module at high speed, over and over, without a single derailment.

What this means is that any model with scale wheels needs decent track. We will soon make hi-rail wheel sets available for those who have questionable track, or track gauged to other than NASG standards.

As for the body shells, we never intended to fund the major cost of reworking the dies to produce a detail-correct model. We did, however, remove the infamous

MORE →

roof sag. After all, this is supposed to be an inexpensive entry-level model produced to enhance the appeal of S scale. Any modeler who wishes can use all those nifty SouthWind parts to produce a fine scale model.

This brings me to the real reason for this letter. It seems many people are determined to drive producers out of S scale. Tom Marsh almost blew his considerable cool over the Airslide critique and I'm less than delighted that you published Mr. Engle's comments. Why? Because he didn't come to us, but went directly to the S scale family. **Boy, does that help sales.** One call and he, as others, would have had a new, improved drive train. Before you publish anything negative about a product, check out the source to see if they have been mistreated or unfairly dealt with. No one forces anyone to buy a model and a producer has the right to satisfy his customers if they are unhappy.

If anyone who has purchased our F units has a unit that's not been upgraded, please let us know and we will gladly do what we can to make you a happy S scaler.

Charles D. Sandersfeld
President,
Omnicon Scale Models

[For related discussion, see the "President's Message" and "Editorial" elsewhere in this issue. — Ed.]

Editor:

I take exception to some of the statements in Oscar Kimsey Jr.'s letter in the August '88 DISPATCH. In fact, I take exception to the whole letter. I feel that "the use of NASG monies and organization to fund and promote the manufacture of quality [tinplate] reproduction items" is a very valid function of NASG. Nor do I view the concept as "a potential raid on the treasury by the toy-collector segment of NASG's membership."

The prime function of NASG is to promote S gauge. Please note that the word is **gauge**, not **scale**. This is a distinction that should not be overlooked. It is only within the very recent past that the majority of S gaugers are scale-oriented, if indeed they are a majority. There is still a very large segment of S gauge model railroaders, and NASG members, whose interest lies in the tinplate area. These model railroaders pay their dues and otherwise support the activities of NASG just like anybody else. To claim that a survey to determine if there is a desire amongst the membership to make tinplate items available is a "potential raid on the treasury" is an unfounded assertion and a distortion of the facts.

There is a contradiction within Mr. Kimsey's letter. In one place he states that "I have no problem with the NASG occasionally sponsoring a scale or tinplate car . . ." In another place he states "It is not the proper role of the NASG to promote the manufacture, distribution, and marketing of tinplate — or scale either." It is very much the proper role of NASG to promote the manufacture, distribution, and marketing of tinplate and scale products. In fact, Mr. Kimsey demands that function (at least for scale products) at the end of his letter.

In that same portion of his letter he uses the phrase "now (not 30 years ago)," apparently as a distinguishing criterion to eliminate American Flyer (and interest in its products) from consideration. How conveniently he overlooks several facts. First, American Flyer S gauge trains are currently in production and may have the largest sales volume of any S gauge product. Second, the Rex line of engines and the Wabash Valley F-3 shells (and numerous scale parts) are still being produced, virtually unchanged from their introduction over 30 years ago. Is Mr. Kimsey suggesting that these products be

excluded from NASG promotions?

To promote S gauge, NASG attempts to interest manufacturers in the production of S gauge products. One of the tools that NASG has available to persuade manufacturers to produce specific items is information extracted from surveys which shows the potential market for those items. This is typically the first step in attempting to get items marketed. If the private sector doesn't respond and the NASG still feels that there is justification for the production of an item recommended by an NASG committee, then it may vote to fund a project to have that item produced. That a profit may be made from the production of the item is not necessarily part of the justification. More important is whether it will meet the needs of a significant portion of the membership and other S gaugers. Also important is whether the availability of that item (and others like it) will attract additional model railroaders to S gauge.

No, Mr. Kimsey, NASG is an association of model railroaders who span the entire spectrum of S gauge, from scratchbuilding the most exact 1/64th scale model of a complex engine (and it might be Sn3) to collecting Gilbert products (and that might very well include the HO line). We have joined together to work for the common good of all. If, over the years, the emphasis of the organization seems to lean one way or the other, that's only because it somewhat reflects the interests of those who are willing to do the work. How much are you willing to do, Mr. Kimsey?

Kent Singer

Editor:

Today I received two "1988 Membership Booklets." One was addressed to "William J. Fraley" and the other "Wm. Fraley." What is more discouraging is that

my name was not listed in the booklet! I have been a member since 1962, and when NASG was reorganized in 1976 my number became 76R0059 and has remained that to this day.

How many members have been "glipped" by your computer? How are you going to let the general membership know that we are still members in good standing?

Also, I would like to suggest that every time you (NASG) send out material to the general membership you enclose a separate membership application form to encourage NASG members to give to a friend. I recently came across two men who model in S and they did not know where to enroll in the NASG. One went to the New Brunswick convention and enrolled there. I sent the other one an old NASG pamphlet I had.

If the NASG would like some help in membership activities, I'd be glad to assist.

Bill Fraley

[Bill's luck, I hope, will get better. We inadvertently omitted his Helper Service ad in one issue, and therefore extended his ad subscription accordingly.]

Editor:

I have just become a member of NASG and finished reading my first copy of the **DISPATCH**, and wish to thank you for your work as editor. I especially enjoyed the article by the Bristol S Gauge Railroaders. I very much wish them the best of luck with their efforts. I do not know of any S scale or S gauge sets available other than from Lionel, and Lionel's sights seem aimed at the collector and operator — not at enticing new people into the hobby. I do not know of any young couples with small children who can afford the money for Lionel AF as a "starter set."

As to the Bristol group's plans to use old AF equipment, I suggest that before they sell the sets they somehow remove or defeat the F-N-R sequence reverse. As a former HO and N scaler who now plans to get into S, I find nothing more annoying than that sequence and its jack-rabbit starts on my old AF equipment.

If I had the means, I would offer an 0-6-0, a 40' boxcar, a covered hopper with removable roof, a

caboose, and enough track to make an oval to fit a 4x8 plywood sheet. This would be large enough to upgrade with sidings and grow without becoming boring. Too bad a group of manufacturers can't get together and offer a whole set of new equipment, e.g., AM loco, AM boxcar, converted AF covered hopper, converted AF caboose, track, and MRC power pack. The price could be competitive with Lionel small sets (\$110-200), and would be a good market test.

Incidentally, I have an AF NYC 4-6-4 that I would love to have converted to scale operation if there were someone who could do it for me. It was given to me as a child, and I would hate to have it just sit there on a shelf, and there is no way that I could pay for a brass version just to have a Hudson.

Michael A. Scivoletti
34 Nestor St.
Franklin, NJ 07416

[We've printed Michael's address in case there are any nearby takers for his Hudson conversion plea. And if it's a 320 or 321, maybe a collector would gladly trade for a brass job.]

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS . . .

Steve Amato
Raymond R. Appler
Lee Armstrong
Thomas Bergenthuin
Frank Berna Jr.
Jamie Bothwell
Joseph Boyko
Kenneth F. Bratko
Dennis Caruso
Edward Cass
Larry B. Chapman
John Chappell
Richard Coffman
Cordis B. Colburn
C. N. Colleran Jr.
William Colleran
William Coomes
Richard A. Craft
Sally Danylak
Joseph T. Deger
Francis J. DeRupo
Craig B. Donath

Lee Durrence
Will Estes
Sam Filiciotto
Jack Fisher
Peter Freedland
Kenneth Fuchs
Wayne Giassel
Philip C. Gosselin
John Green
Bill Hagenlocher
Arthur L. Hamilton
Henry J. Hauschild III
William A. Heiss
F. Lamont Heppe Jr.
Thomas W. Hewitt
Chris Hood
Earl C. Hoover
Tom Hopman
Gilbert Hulin
Timm Jackson
Peter Jensen
Jack Kirby

Donald Kitchen
Steven Ksenych
Robert J. Kugler
Larry Lane, M.D.
Ed Lawson
William J. Lenart
Charles Leonard
John Long Jr.
Walt Matuch
Daniel Mayer
Keith E. Miller
Ronald J. Morreale
David M. Mulee
Michael Nolan
Ronald Oak
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Keith Olmanni
John Oross
Carter S. Pierce
Phil Pirie
Kenneth Plank
David Plourde

Dan Ponzul
Peter J. Prizzi Jr.
Kevin Ross
Michael A. Scivoletti
Norman Severin
Richard N. Sholtzberger
Shawn Solderitch
Phillip A. Solomon
Joseph Soreth
David Stevens
R. Scott Tilton
Grant Townsend
Steven E. Tripp
Greg J. Turinetti
Bernard Turowski
Joseph Vishak
James Wagner
Charles Weingarten
Willis F. White
Donald E. Williams
Orlyn D. Zibley

NEW BRUNSWICK '88

CONVENTION OVERVIEW

by Dick Karnes

I rode up to New Brunswick from Philadelphia with John and Thelma Bortz on Wednesday afternoon, July 6. It was hot out, and the cool, spacious Hyatt Regency lobby was refreshing. Once I settled in, I went downstairs to the vast display room, where people and modules from all over were beginning to arrive. I spent my time helping set up modules and renewing old acquaintances. Several of us took a dinner break nearby at Tumulty's, where O and standard gauge toy trains whizzed by high overhead.

Set-Up

By Thursday noon the modular layout had been completed and the owners of the individual modules were busily making last-minute adjustments and checking out the electrical system. The NASG had its own booth at the display hall entryway, where, in addition to registration, conventioners could pick up their convention cars and buy various items such as the American Flyer NASG commemorative car, track gages, and raffle tickets for a custom-painted brass tank car.

Manufacturer's Displays

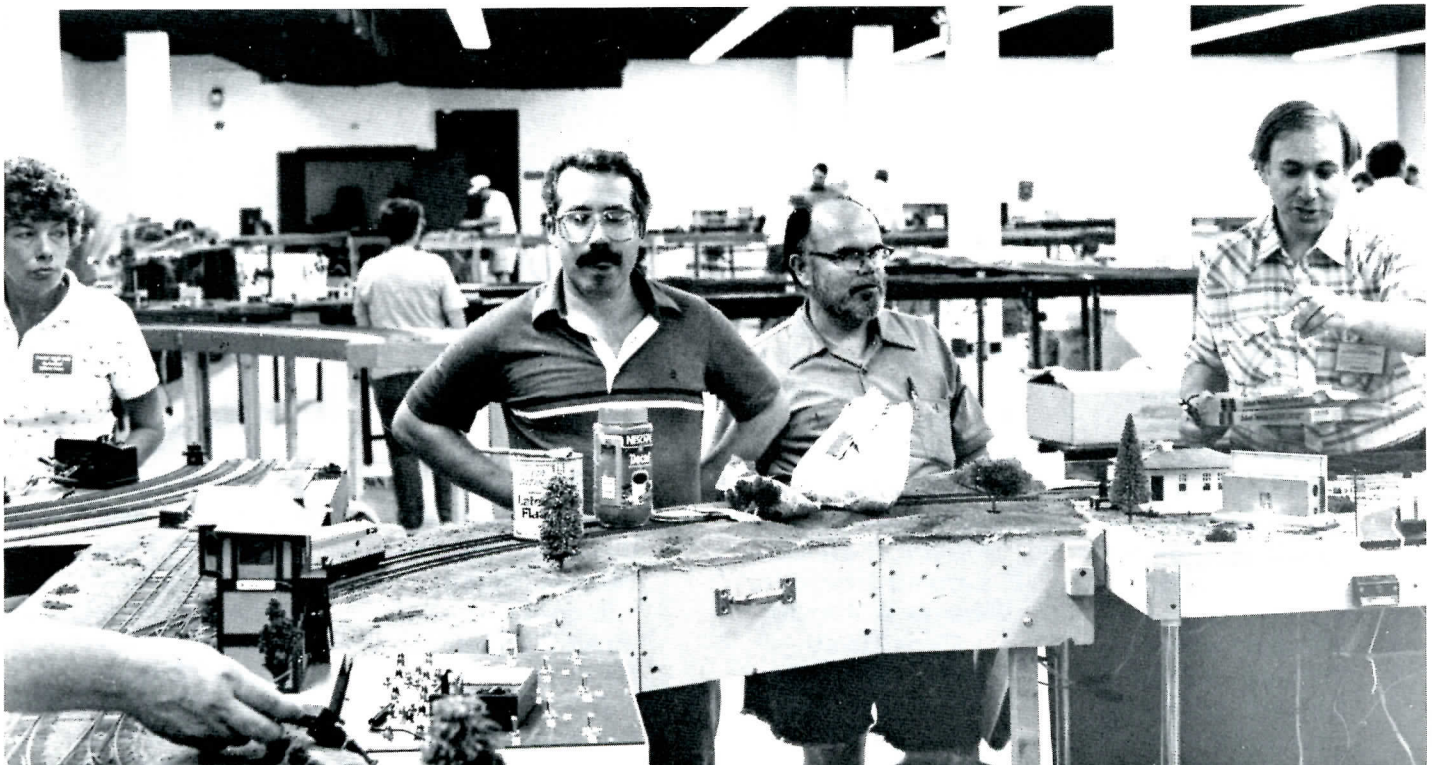
On Thursday, several manufacturers and suppliers were busily setting up around the periphery of the room, as well as in another room on the main floor. The rest of the manufacturer/supplier displays were



Bob Werre

Here's John Hall discussing his line of decals with a customer.

set up on Friday. The variety of goods was truly astounding, ranging from used Flyer to Lionel's new 1988 AF line to new brass car pilot models to some interesting plastic kit prototypes. (More on these in the Manufacturer News column.)



The Bristol Club members assemble their portion of the modular layout.

Clinics

The clinics which I went to were well-organized and well-attended. I learned about railroad operations at breweries, tips on modeling with plastic, how to detail diesels, and some simple secrets on building structures. There were so many clinics to choose from that it would have been difficult to attend even half of them.

New York City Transit Authority

I chose to go on the New York City Transit Authority tour and the Black River & Western trip. The Transit Authority tour was wonderful. The bus took us to the Coney Island (Brooklyn) storage yards and heavy repair shops, which were undergoing a \$60M modernization at the time. Coney Island performs regularly-scheduled maintenance as well as major damage repairs. Regular maintenance must all be done between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm so the full fleet

are work-train cars outfitted for special tasks and painted yellow.

Notwithstanding the construction, we were treated to a deluxe tour by Assistant Superintendent Joe Testini's supervisory crew. We were divided into two groups, and our guide for most of the tour was John Galeoto — a 20-year veteran who clearly loves his work.

Our first stop was the traction motor shop, where motors are completely disassembled, rebuilt, and rebalanced. Next we visited the wheel-and-axle shop, where worn wheels are removed from their axles, retrued on giant lathes (or replaced as necessary), and repressed onto the axles. This is heavy work indeed! There is a tiny transfer table which holds one wheel-axle set at a time, shuttling them back and forth from storage tracks in the truck disassembly area to tracks leading to the various machining stations and back again.

We then were shown the truck-removal and reinstallation area. Strings of subway cars are run through a special track which contains a 20' track section on a transfer table which is also an elevator. The cars are maneuvered so that one truck at a time is centered on the table. A giant "claw" grabs the carbody and holds it up while the table lowers the truck from the car. Workmen disconnect the electrical cables, the table moves out from underneath the car and rises to track level, and an overhead crane comes along and grabs the entire truck (some 5 tons) and hauls it to the disassembly area. On its way back, the crane picks up a newly-rebuilt truck and deposits it on the transfer table. The process of reinstallation is just the reverse of the removal sequence. The entire replacement operation takes about 20 minutes.

Trucks which don't need replacement are put on a special track which has wheel grinders built in at rail level. As the truck glides imperceptibly along, the grinders completely resurface the wheel treads.

Then we emerged into the major repair area. Here, cars in all sorts of distress are completely torn down and rebuilt. And here we got our first look at cars covered with graffiti — a surprisingly small percentage of the total number of cars we saw. The Transit Authority has a very active "graffiti-free" program. Any car which has been graffitied which comes in for maintenance or repair is automatically entered in the graffiti-free program. The car is then stripped inside and out down to bare metal. It is then repainted with special epoxy resins to which common spray laquer paints don't stick. If the car's exterior is stainless steel, the outside is left bare. Then, whenever the car is re-graffitied by a local "artist," it is brought into the cleaning area where the "artwork" is easily wiped off the inside with special cleaners and/or removed from the outside with a chemical spray bath. It seems the youthful



Dick Karnes

A subway car undergoes heavy repairs in the NYCTA Coney Island shops.

is available for rush-hour commuters. There is one other similar installation in New York City, Fort Tryon at the north end of Manhattan Island. These plants are responsible for the continual functioning of the 6000 cars on the subway system. The cars in regular service are all modern, none having been built before 1961. The few older cars at Coney Island

MORE →

artists are becoming discouraged by their creations not seeing the light of the next day, and so the problem is diminishing!

At the end of the tour we were taken out into the 113-track storage yard, and given a great opportunity for panoramic photography from the catwalk of the four-storey-high interlocking tower. Those interested in the electrical-control side of model railroading saw some eye-popping yard control panels that are the envy of any basement layout operator.

We were then escorted back to our waiting bus, where we thanked Joe and John for an excellent afternoon.

Black River & Western

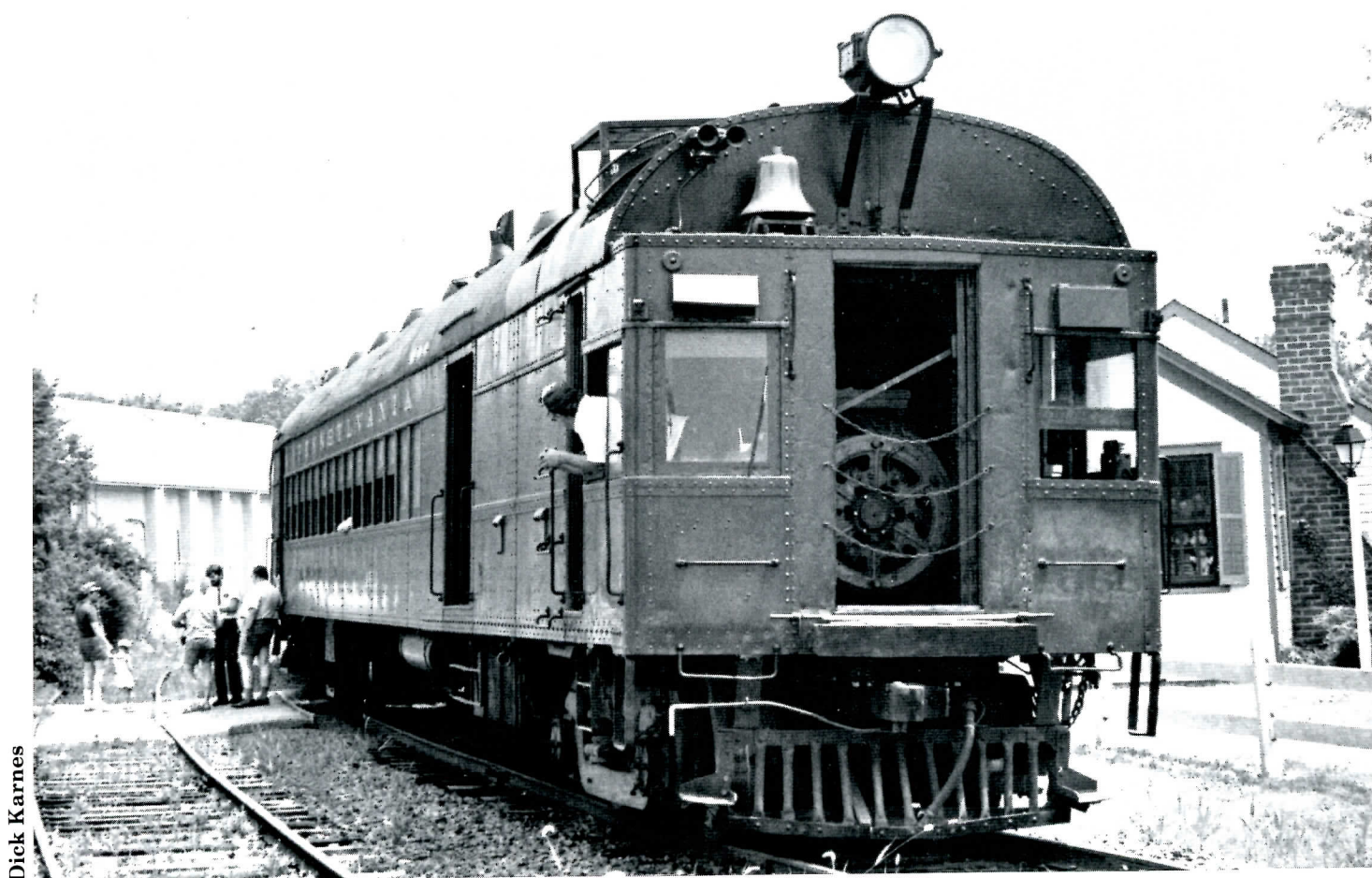
The Black River & Western tour was superb. The BR&W runs on a former PRR branch connecting the PRR Belvedere-Delaware line with the Lehigh Valley and CNJ in central New Jersey. We arrived at Flemington, NJ around 11:00 am, where some of us immediately found a model railroad shop while waiting for the train. And what a train! It was Pennsylvania Railroad diesel-mechanical doodlebug No. 4666, hauling a coach trailer with an auxiliary cab in the rear.

Flemington is normally the northern terminus for passenger excursions, usually hauled by an Alco RS-1. (In fact, except for #4666, all motive power on

the BR&W are Alco S and RS first-generation diesels.) But we set out for Three Bridges, the northern terminus three miles away (a junction with Conrail, nee Lehigh Valley). One of the crew obligingly narrated what we were passing along the way, and even stopped the train for a photo run-by. Soon we were on our way back to Flemington, stopping at every grade crossing. Reason: Each crossing signal had to be turned on with a key by the brakeman.

We waited in the model railroad shop at Flemington for the northbound way freight to pass by, and then scrambled back onto the doodlebug for a liesurely ride to Ringoes, about six miles south. There we laid over for the regularly-scheduled northbound passenger train to pass, meanwhile scarfing up all the hot dogs (and most of the rest of the food) at the snack bar. Some of us also looked over the small but respectable collection of rolling stock there, including an NYO&W parlor-observation I had seen many times as a kid on the West Shore RR.

Then we reboarded and proceeded five more miles south to Lambertville, the southern terminus. The beautiful large stone station, although converted to a restaurant, retains its old charm. Just the other side of the single track is the picturesque Delaware & Raritan Canal, lined with flowers and shrubbery. And on the other side of the station is the Delaware River, perhaps a half-mile wide. Some of us used



PRR diesel-mechanical doodlebug No. 4666 awaits conventioners at Flemington, New Jersey.



Here's Wally Collins, the *S Gauge Herald's* long-time publisher, discussing rolling qualities with Dave Bailey at the modular layout's "hump."

the 75-minute layover to walk across the river bridge to New Hope, PA and photograph the New Hope & Ivyland.

The trip back was punctuated by a brief photo stop by a decaying rotary snowplow and a fifteen-minute layover at Ringoes for the southbound freight.

Although the temperature remained in the 90s all day, no one seemed to have minded.

Strasburg

Strasburg, PA is a marvelous place — home of the Strasburg Railroad (the country's oldest continuously-operating common carrier), the Pennsylvania State Railroad Museum, the

headquarters and national museum of the Train Collectors of America (TCA), and the location of the Red Caboose Motel, at which an entire family can lodge in any one of a dozen or so specially-furnished authentic railroad cabooses. The bus ride took over two hours, but Strasburg was certainly worth the trip.

The Strasburg passenger train is pulled by a small, beautifully-restored Ex-Great Western 2-10-0, and includes in its consist some fine old wooden PRR coaches. The entire run takes about 25 minutes at a very leisurely pace through the picturesque Pennsylvania-Dutch Amish countryside, and terminates at the junction with Conrail/Amtrak (old PRR) at Paradise. After a brief pause for any boarding or departing passengers, the locomotive runs around the train and hauls it, backwards, back to Strasburg.

The Pennsylvania State Railway Museum is right across the road from the station, and houses a small but well-kept collection of railroad equipment indigenous to Pennsylvania. There is, as one might expect, a preponderance of PRR equipment, including "Rivets," the original GG-1, the only one with a riveted exterior. There is also a modest collection of scale model and toy trains, and various historical displays, all very tastefully done.

The TCA Museum is impossible to describe. It's next to the Red Caboose motel, and looks like a train station itself. Inside are operating layouts in every

MORE →



Sig Fleischmann accompanies a PRR K-4 along the convention's modular layout main line

popular and once-popular tinplate gauge, as well as an overwhelming static display of toy train equipment on every wall. The collection far exceeds the available display space, so the display equipment is rotated periodically in and out of storage. If you're interested in toy trains and happen to be travelling anywhere near Pennsylvania, go to this museum!

Train-Watching

I did manage to break away for about an hour and a half — no easy task — to go train-watching at the New Brunswick Amtrak station two blocks from the hotel. Conrail, Amtrak, and NJ Transit share this electrified ex-PRR four-track main line, and even on weekends you can count on about six trains an hour. I enjoyed myself and took a few pictures. But, having lived in the area as a youngster, I miss the richness of the variety of trains that used to whiz by here — PRR MUs, GG-1s, freight box motors, and passenger cars in all color schemes from two dozen different railroads. Today's ubiquitous stainless-steel passenger consists rapidly became monotonous. I walked back to the S gauge fantasyland at the Hyatt to recover.

Swap Meet

Saturday's all-S swap meet was a smashing success, judging by the crowd, the activity, the interest, and the money-changing. Business in used AF was brisk. The scale vendors seemed by comparison to do less well, although they — unlike most AF vendors — were there for all four days of relatively steady business. Jeff Wilson had discounted his "normal" stock preparatory to changing the emphasis of his business, so he was very busy. SouthWind too was swamped, with people fighting through the crowds to either buy their excellent diesel detail parts or give Jettie their deposit checks for his new NYC passenger cars.

Contest

The model contest drew 67 entries, the highest number ever. The average quality of the models was high, and the variety truly startling. The top finishers received specific prizes related to their winning categories. Mike Byers' best-in-show PRR flatcar won a brass locomotive.

Banquet

The happy hour was quite happy, and the beef dinner was expertly presented and very tasty. Door prize drawings, sprinkled throughout the proceedings, were efficiently handled. The award presentations were brief but effective. Bill Schaumburg, editor of *Railroad Model Craftsman*, was the featured speaker. He gave an excellent slide show of Chicago passenger trains during the transition from private passenger trains to Amtrak



Bob Werre

The AF action was heavy at the Saturday all — S swap meet.

service. After the banquet everyone filed through the model contest room to see the winning entries. The festivities drew to a close with the traditional auction and farewell libations in the lobby lounge.

Awards

Several special yearly awards were presented, as follows:

NASG Manufacturer of the Year: Charlie Sandersfeld of Omnicon Models. Said Charlie: "Thank you very much for the award. I intend to win it next year also!"

Bernie Thomas Memorial Award: Don DeWitt for his work on developing and perfecting the NASG modular standards, allowing such things as the 400 feet of modules at the convention to function as a single layout.

The Bristol Club's A. C. Gilbert Award: Tom Barker, for continuing the S gauge tinplate tradition.

Tony Perles Publishing Award: Bob Lerner, for his Sn3 article in *Model Railroading*.

The Central New York S Gaugers' Charlie Stackpoole Award: Henry Roos, for the amateur



Bob Werre

Triangle Mfg. looks absolutely real on Stan Stokrocki's module, voted the favorite.

contest entry which most exemplifies Charlie's spirit.

Module Awards:

People's Choice Module Contest:

- 1st — Stan Stokrocki
- 2nd — Doug Miller
- 3rd — Don DeWitt

Module Brought the Greatest Distance:
Tom Hawley, Lansing, MI

Attendance

Convention registration totalled 296, with an additional 304 purchasing the Saturday-only ticket, for a grand total of 600 attendees!

NEW BRUNSWICK '88

NASG NATIONAL CONVENTION MODEL CONTEST WINNERS

by Kent Singer
NASG Contest Committee Chairman

Photographs of First-Place Winners
by Bob Werre

BEST IN SHOW

Michael Byers PRR F30A Flatcar

MASTER CRAFTSMAN

Steam Locomotives

1st **Joe Scales** Virginian Hudson
2nd **Ed Filer** Horizontal Climax
3rd **James Soberman** NYC #100 Mogul

Diesel & Electric Locomotives

1st **Dick Karnes** Westchester 2-C-2 Boxcab
Electric
2nd **Dick Karnes** Westchester MU Car
3rd **Billy Wade** UP FP-7A

Passenger Cars

1st **Paul Stevens** NH Wood-Sheathed
Observation
2nd **Billy Wade** UP Coach
3rd **James Soberman** Atlantic Central
Combine

Freight & MoW

1st **Michael Byers** PRR F30A Flatcar
2nd (tie) **Joe Scales** ATSF Reefer
James Soberman Crane
3rd **James Soberman** Crane Boom Tender

Structures

1st **Billy Wade** Steam Sand House
2nd **Steven Myers** Junction Control Building

CRAFTSMAN

Steam Locomotives, Scratchbuilt

1st **Bill Pirie** SP Ten Wheeler

Passenger Cars, Scratchbuilt

1st **Mark Waelder** MDT Milk Tank Trailer Car
2nd **Douglas Miller** New York Southern Tier
Sn3 Combine

Freight & MoW, Scratchbuilt

1st **Tom Boldt** PRR N6-b Wooden Caboose
2nd **Bob Eves** B&O Boom Tender
3rd **George Ricketts** NYC 35' Wood Flatcar

Structures, Scratchbuilt

1st **Daniel Navarre** C&O Mallet House
2nd **David Pool** Freelanced Freight
Station/Office

Passenger Cars, Kit & Converted

1st **Bob Werre** 12-1 Pullman

Freight & MoW, Kit & Converted

1st **John Hall** Reading Covered Hopper
2nd **John Hall** Reading TOFC Flatcar
3rd **John Hall** Reading Bean Car

Diesel & Electric Locomotives, Hi-Rail

1st No award given.
2nd **Pat Altieri** Pair of WP PAs

Freight & MoW, Hi-Rail

1st No award given.
2nd **Pat Altieri** PFE Reefer
3rd **Pat Altieri** UP Highcube

AMATEUR

Freight & MoW, Scratchbuilt

1st **John E. Darling** Depressed Center
Flatcar with E-Boat
2nd **Bob Dexter** Wanaque Central
Sn2 Caboose
3rd **Wallace Collins** MKT Stockcar

Structures, Scratchbuilt

1st **Neil Redding** Interlocking Tower
2nd **William H. Mark III** High Falls
Station
3rd **Wallace Collins** St. Albans Coaling
Tower

Steam Locomotives, Kit & Converted

1st **William H. Mark Jr.** West Shore
(Reading) 2-8-0
2nd **Gerry Evans** SP 2-8-0
3rd **Henry Roos** CNJ 2-4-4T

Diesel & Elec. Locomotives, Kit & Converted

1st **William H. Mark Jr.** West Shore GE 44
Tonner
2nd **John E. Darling** UP PB-1

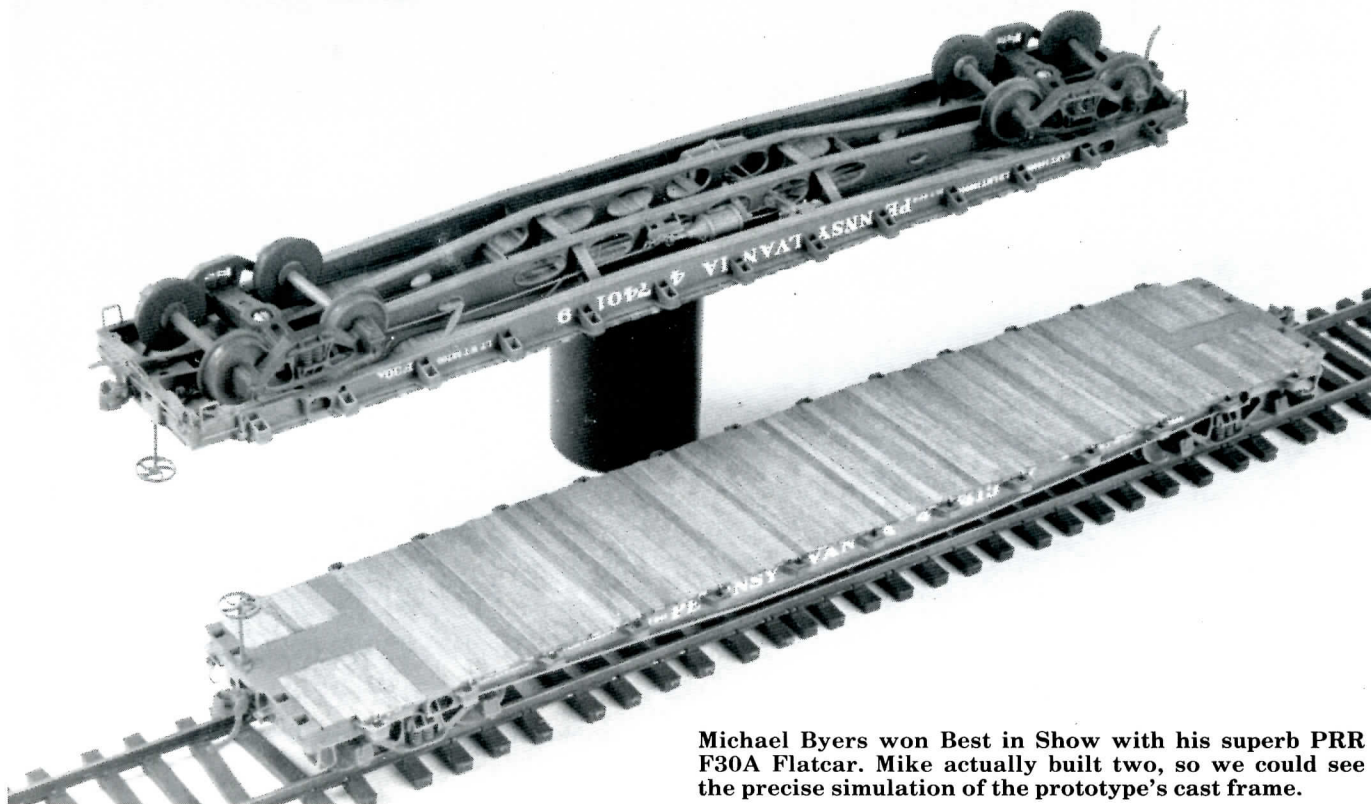
Freight & MoW, Kit & Converted

1st **William H. Mark III** Conrail 60' Waffle
Side Boxcar
2nd **Henry Roos** CNJ Steel Caboose
3rd **Charlie Brown** GN Snowplow

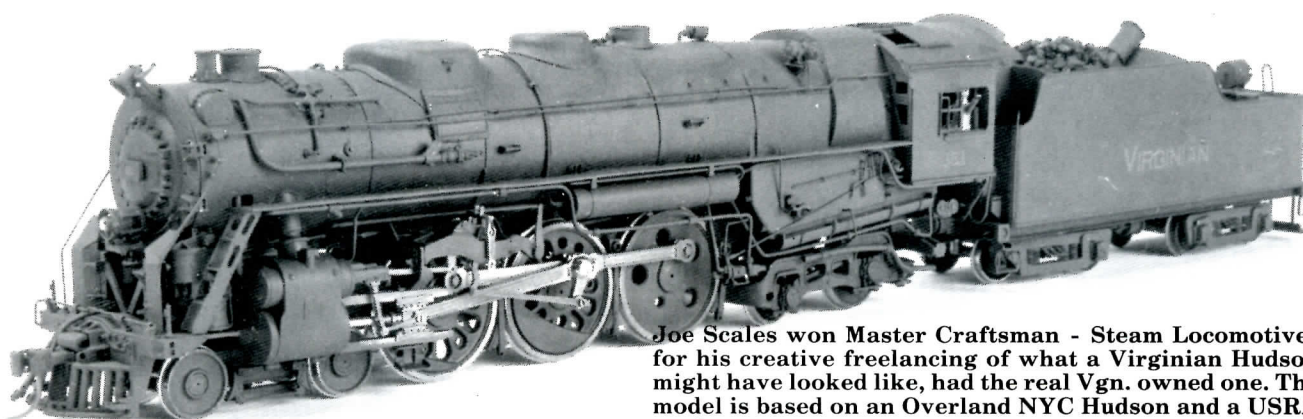
Structures, Kit & Converted

1st **Brian Jackson** Steam Loco Coaling Tower
2nd **Tim Jackson** AH&D Donkey Engine

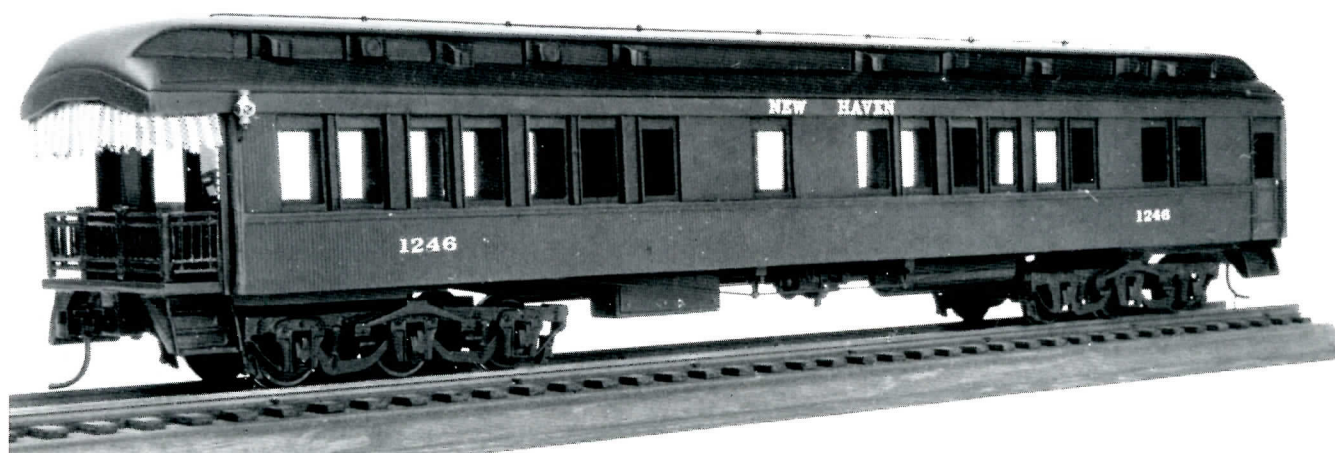
(Text continued on Page 20)



Michael Byers won Best in Show with his superb PRR F30A Flatcar. Mike actually built two, so we could see the precise simulation of the prototype's cast frame.

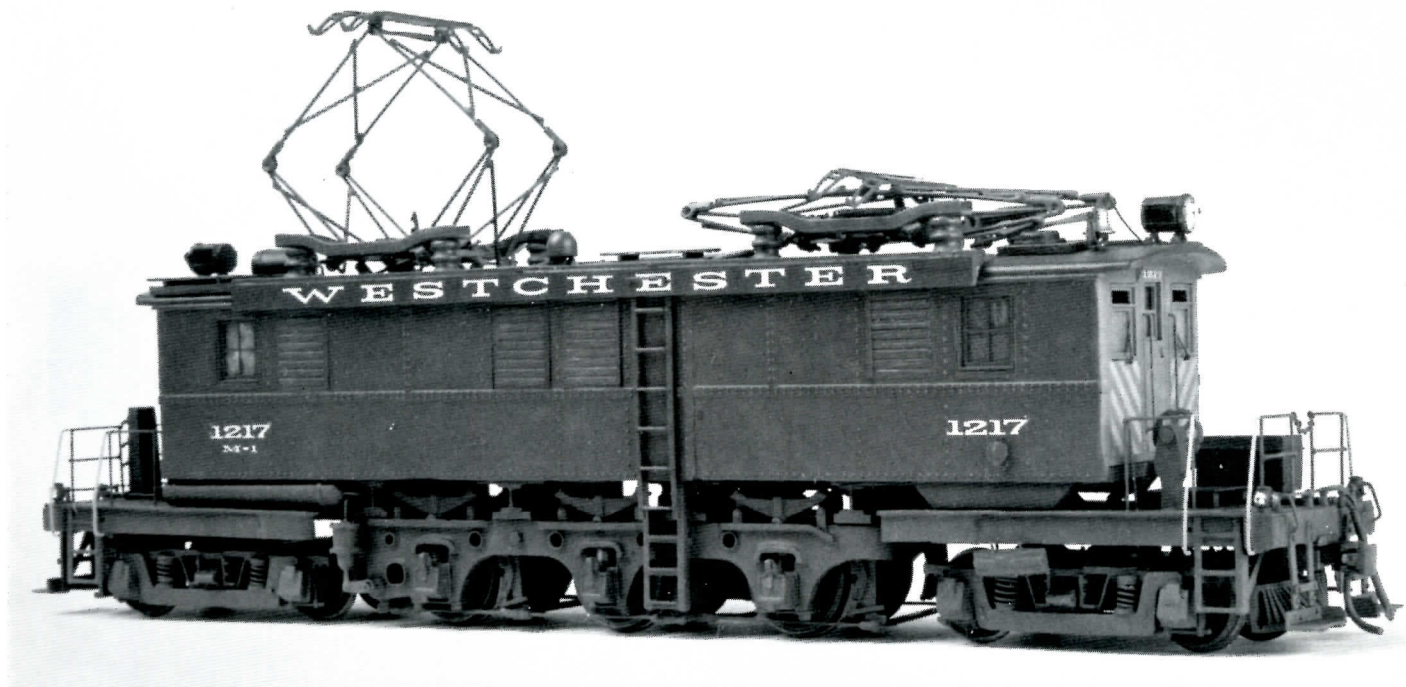


Joe Scales won Master Craftsman - Steam Locomotives for his creative freelancing of what a Virginian Hudson might have looked like, had the real Vgn. owned one. The model is based on an Overland NYC Hudson and a USRA tender.



Paul Stevens bested Master Craftsman — Passenger Cars for this beautiful New Haven Wood-Sheathed observation car, built from a Jesse Bennett article.

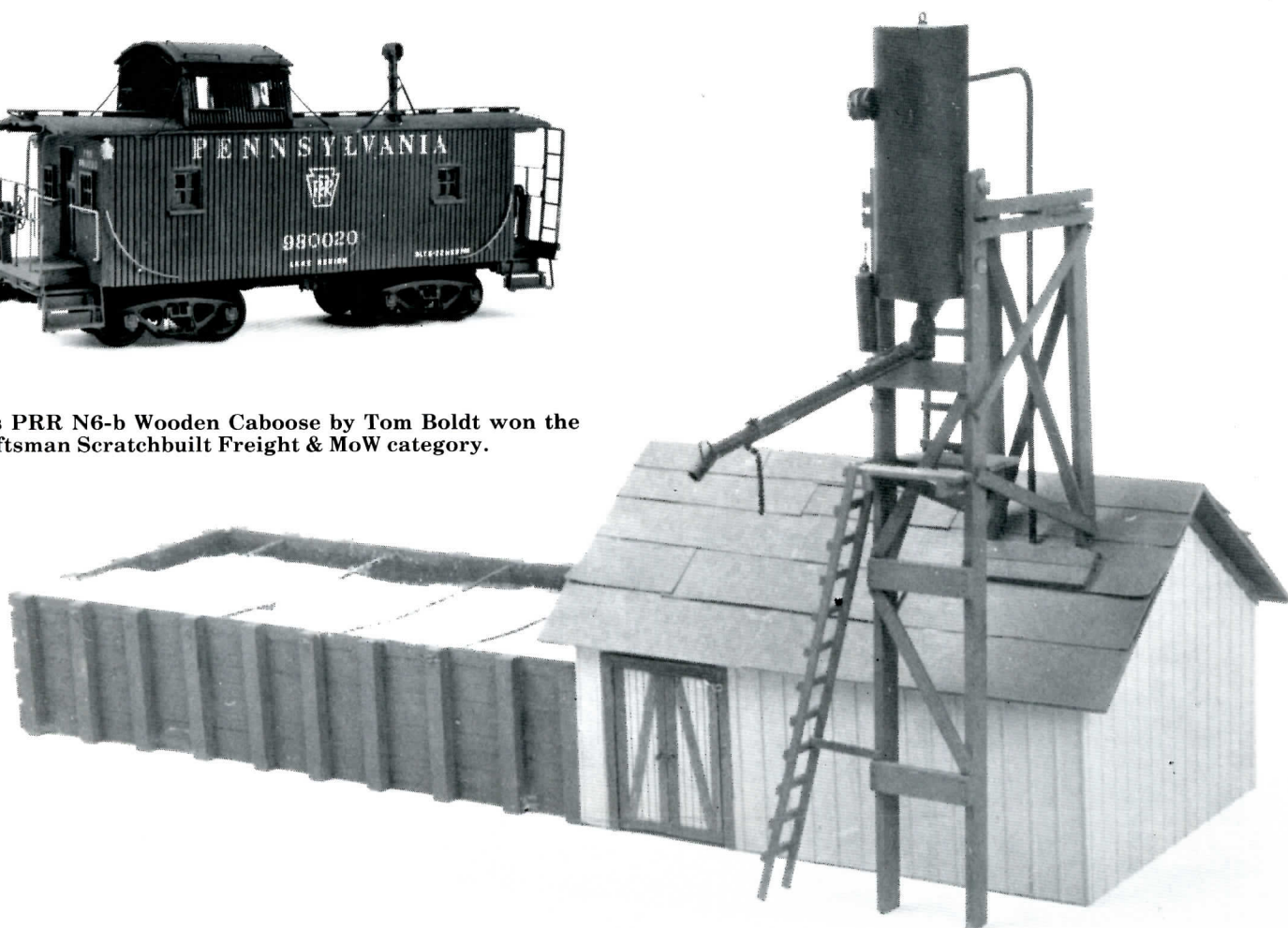
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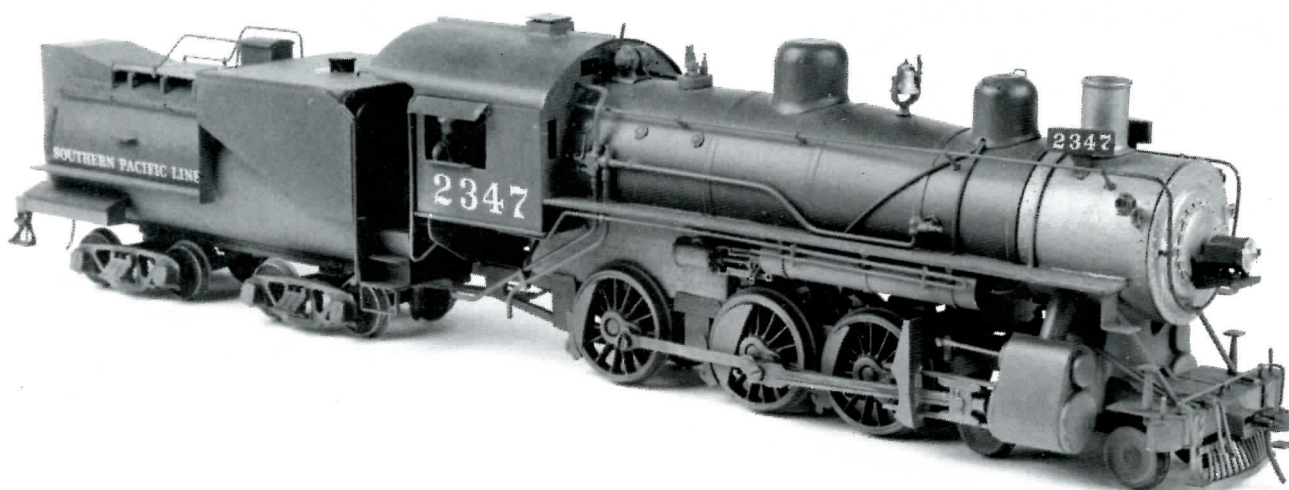
First Place, Master Craftsman - Diesel & Electric Locomotives was won by Dick Karnes with his freelanced Westchester 2-C-2 Boxcab.



This PRR N6-b Wooden Caboose by Tom Boldt won the Craftsman Scratchbuilt Freight & MoW category.



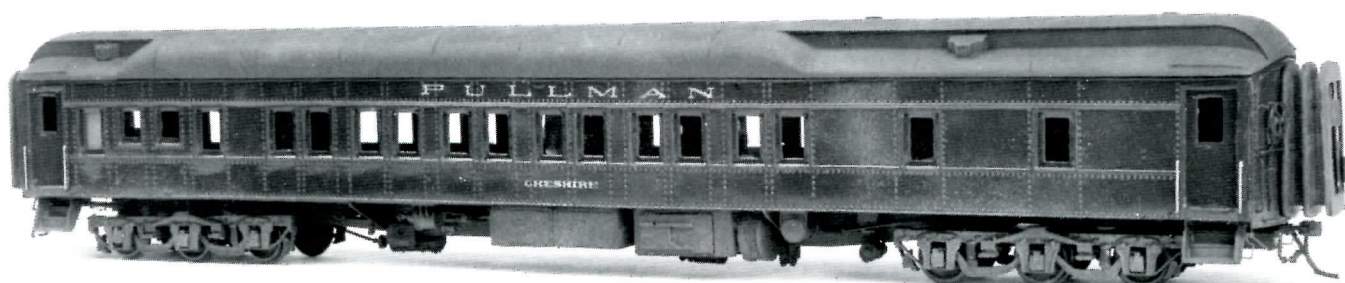
Billy Wade cinched Master Craftsman — Structures for this steam-era sand house based on a D&RGW prototype.



Bill Pirie's SP Ten-Wheeler won in the Craftsman Scratchbuilt Steam Locomotives category.

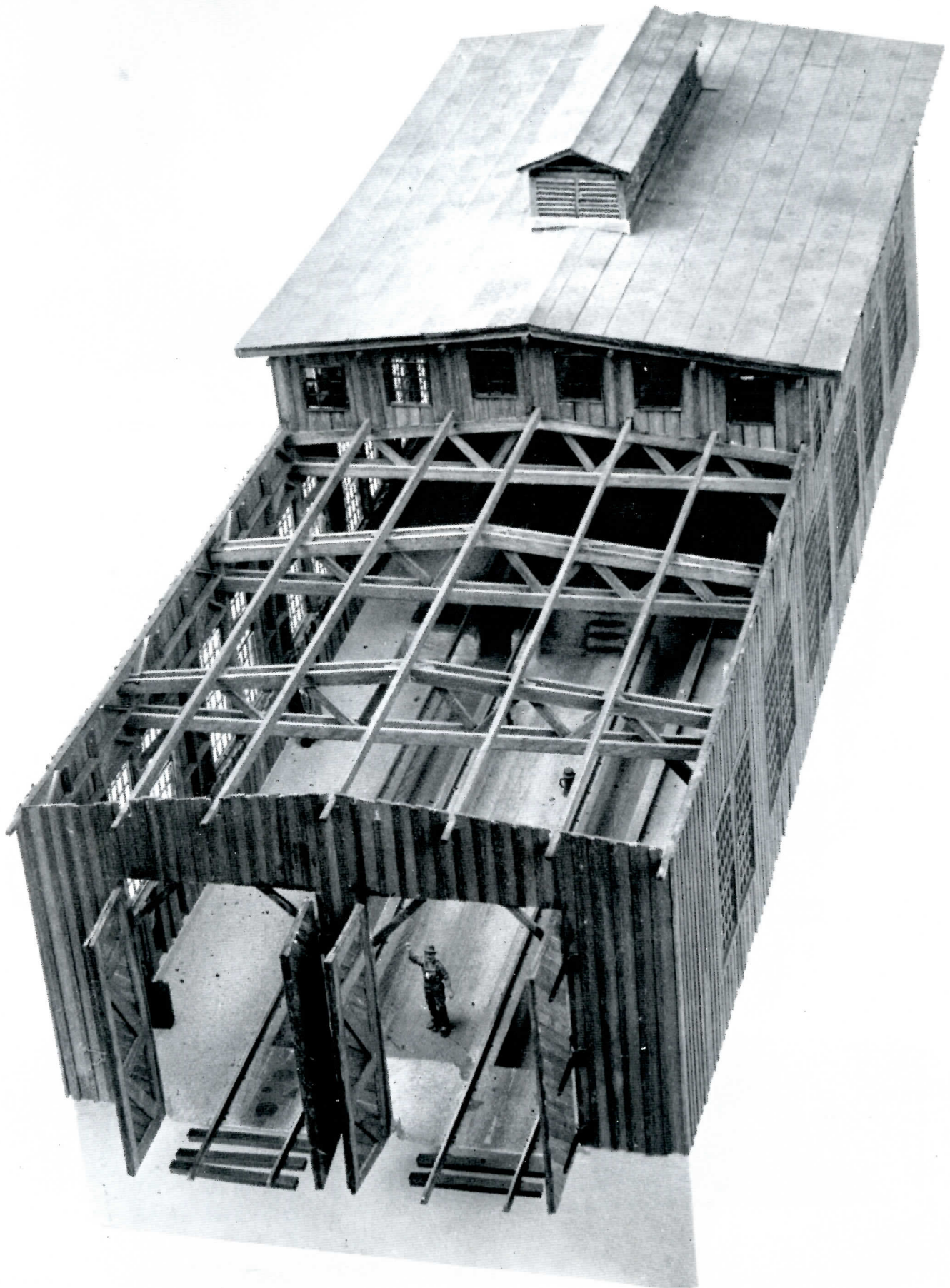


Mark Waelder's gorgeous MDT Milk Tank Trailer Car walked away with the blue ribbon in the Craftsman Scratchbuilt Passenger Cars competition. (Yes, it really is a passenger-train car!)



Bob Werre built this 12-1 Pullman from a Scenery Unlimited kit, and modified the roof for air conditioning. It won the Craftsman Kit & Converted Passenger Car category.

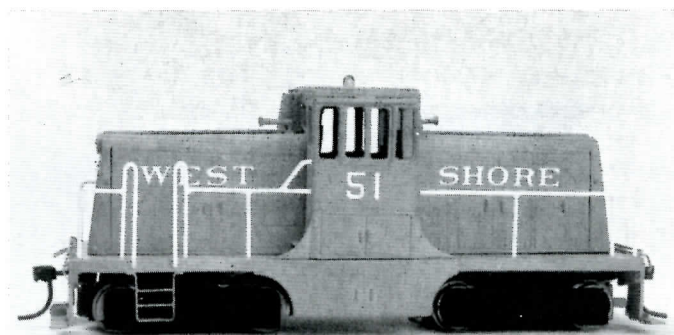
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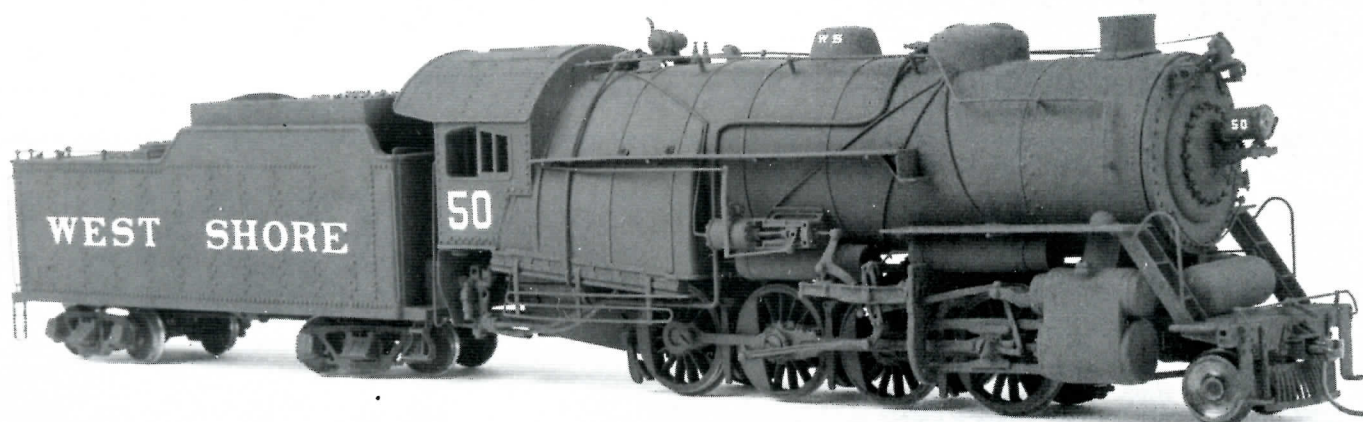
Dan Navarre's C&O mallet house, built from railroad plans for the prototype in Hinton, West Virginia, was the best of the Craftsman Scratchbuilt Structures.



Danny Click's nice-looking Train Stuff Railbox boxcar won the Junior competition.



William H. Mark Jr.'s GE 44-tonner, built from a Locomotive Workshop kit, topped the Amateur Kit & Converted Diesel & Electric Locomotive category.

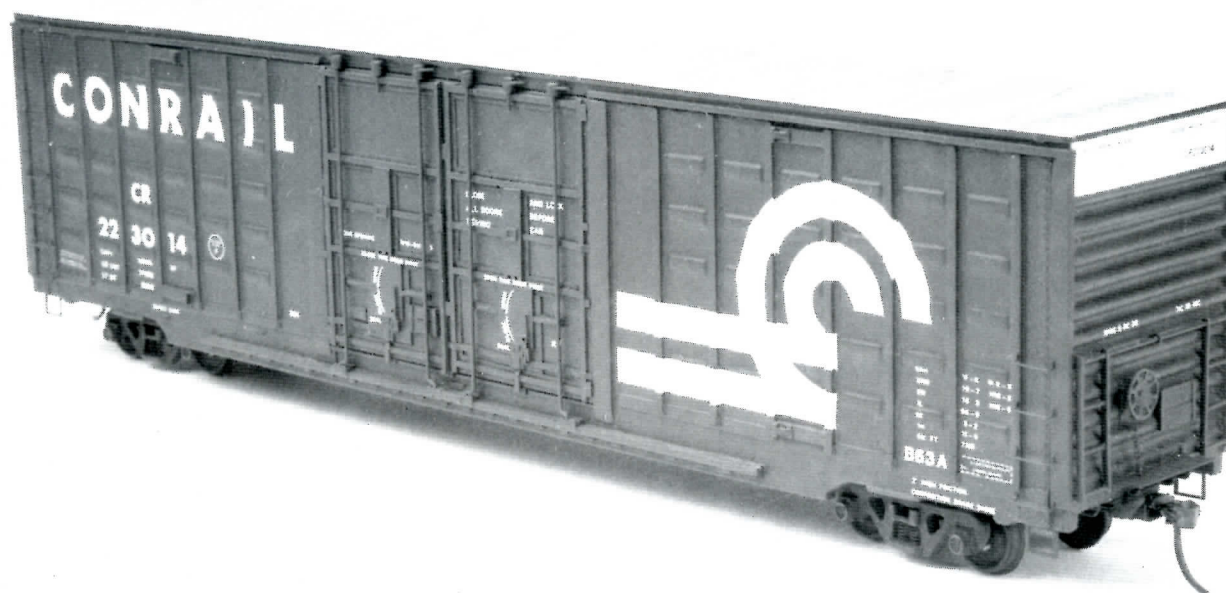


Tops in Amateur Kit & Converted Steam Locomotives was William H. Mark Jr.'s West Shore 2-8-0 built from a Lehigh Valley Models Reading I-10 kit.

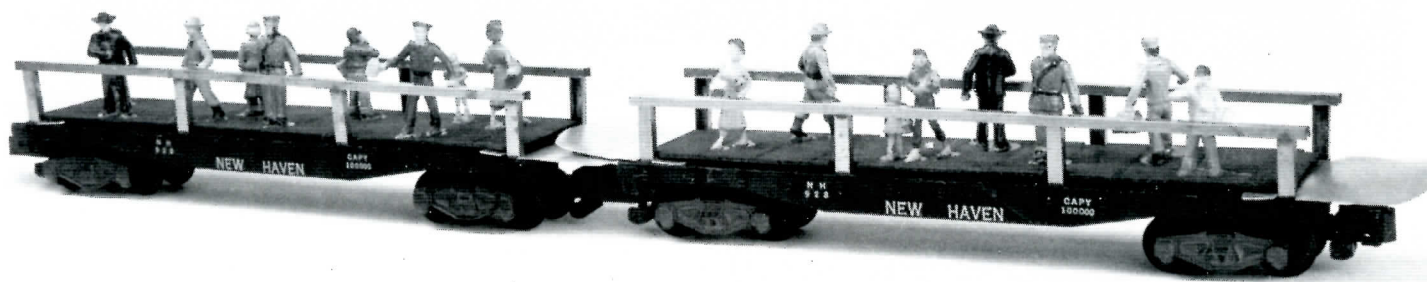


This 1-o-o-o-ng depressed-center flat, complete with E-boat load, both amazed and amused conventioners. It was built by John E. Darling, and took first in the Amateur Scratchbuilt Freight & MoW category.

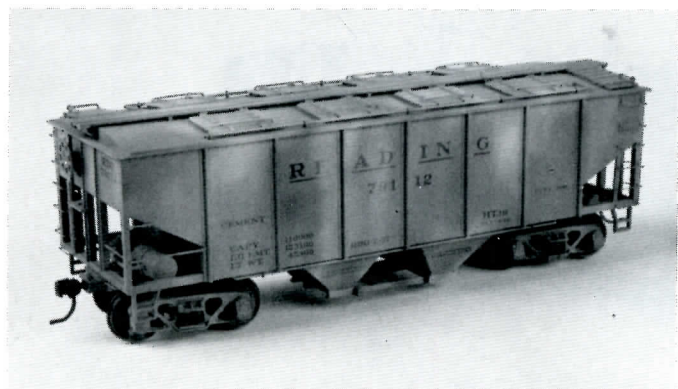
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Best in the Amateur Kit & Converted Freight & MoW category was William H. Mark III's Conrail 60' waffle-side boxcar. This neatly-finished giant was built from a Train Stuff kit.



Floyd LaBarre Jr. displayed a whole train of these AF-converted Rail Fan Cars, and won the Amateur Hi-Rail Freight & MoW event with them.



John Hall's fine Class HTJR Reading covered hopper, converted from an AM kit, won best of the Craftsman Kit & Converted Freight & MoW entries.

Freight & MoW, Hi-Rail

1st **Floyd LaBarre Jr.**

Rail Fan Cars

PHOTOS

Color

1st **Bob Werre**

Black & White

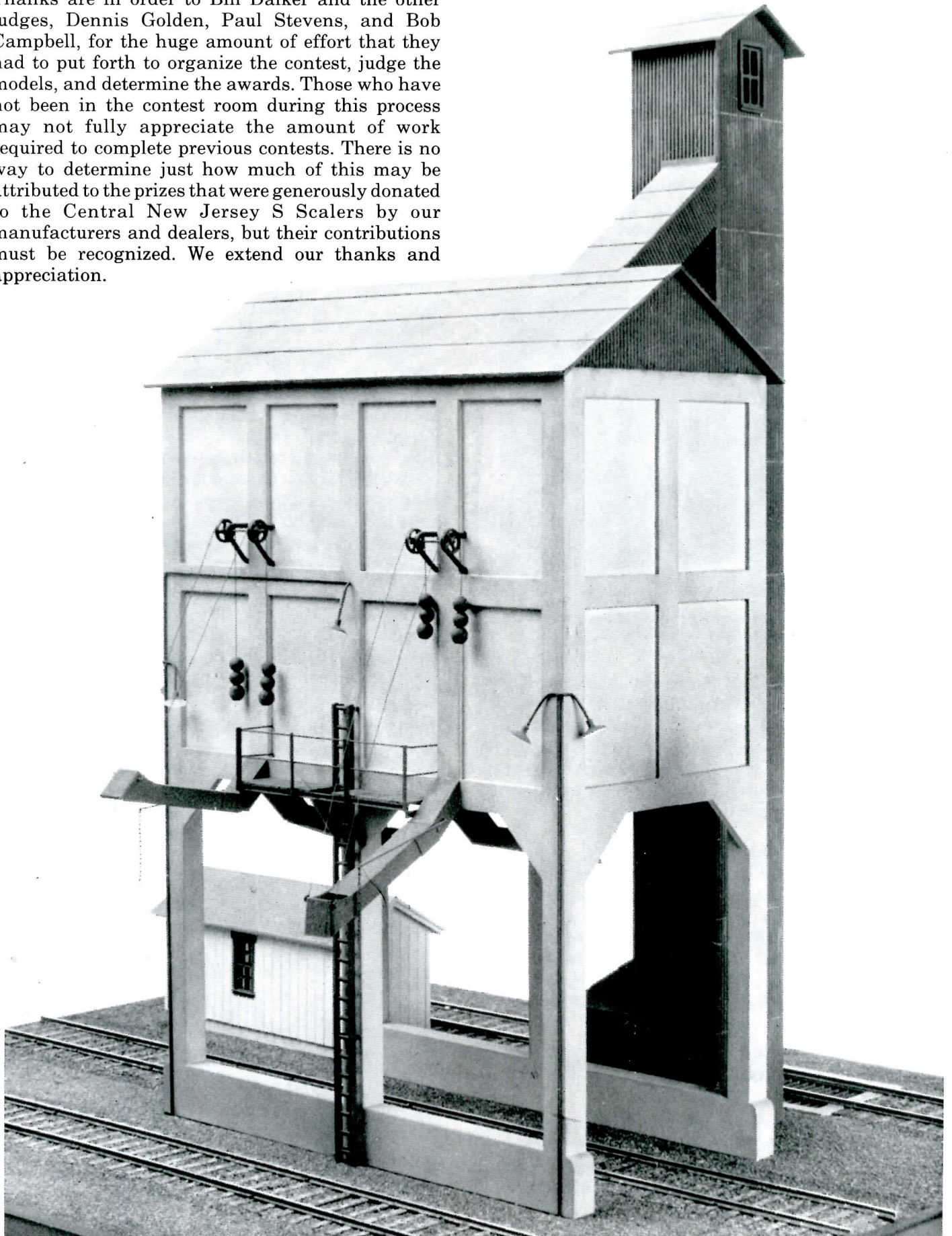
1st **Bob Werre**

JUNIOR

1st **Danny Click**

Railbox Boxcar

Thanks are in order to Bill Daiker and the other judges, Dennis Golden, Paul Stevens, and Bob Campbell, for the huge amount of effort that they had to put forth to organize the contest, judge the models, and determine the awards. Those who have not been in the contest room during this process may not fully appreciate the amount of work required to complete previous contests. There is no way to determine just how much of this may be attributed to the prizes that were generously donated to the Central New Jersey S Scalers by our manufacturers and dealers, but their contributions must be recognized. We extend our thanks and appreciation.

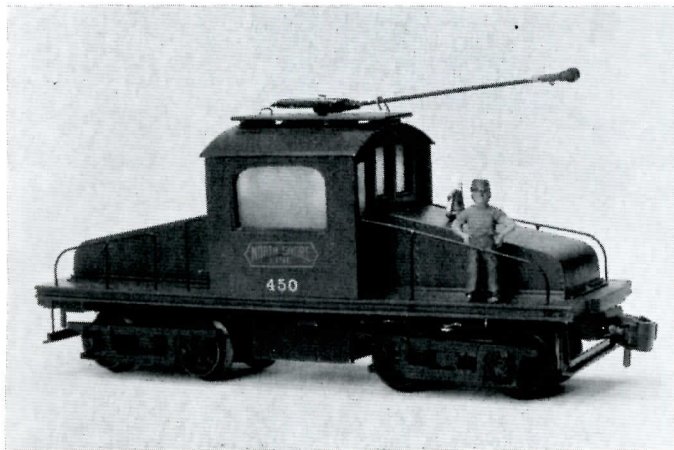


First-time contest entrant Brian Jackson took the Amateur Kit & Converted Structures category with his Lehigh Valley Models Steam Loco Coaling Tower.

NEW BRUNSWICK '88 MANUFACTURER NEWS

New Items Seen at New Brunswick

Hoquat Hobbies (P.O. Box 253, Dunellen, NJ 08812) had a GM bus and a small electric steeple-cab locomotive. The bus (about \$10) is a typical 1950s style, sorely needed on S layouts, many of which — especially Flyer — represent that era. The steeple-cab (about \$30) is a little cutie, and fits over a modified HO diesel switcher chassis (not included).



Bob Werre

New from Hoquat Hobbies is a delightful body kit for a small electric steeple-cab locomotive (below).

Omnicon Scale Models (50 S. Lively Blvd., Elk Grove Village, IL 60007) has lots of extra brass locomotive parts and components. Send your name, plus a stamped (65 cents), addressed 9x12 envelope. You'll get about 15 Xeroxed pages of parts listing and prices (no illustrations, though — consult the locomotive pictures in their ads).

Late news from Omnicon: The PRR M1 - a pilot model from Korea's FM Models is in. Per Charlie Sandersfeld, Omnicon prexy, the model is "absolutely superb — a very fine model." Mechanisms are by NorthWest Short Line, motor by Pittman. Nearly all are sold out (only 20 unreserved as of 10 Sept.). Expected delivery is Dec. 1, 1988. Order through Patch or your favorite dealer. Specify 4-, 6-, or 8-wheel-truck tender.

The Ma & Pa 4-4-0 won the Omnicon survey, with the D&SL 2-6-6-0 second. The 4-4-0, now in work, will be a screwdriver kit, under \$300.

Omnicon is making test shots of the P-70 coach roof, but "will not be rushed" in getting the kit to market. Wabash Valley will cast the truck sideframes. A kit with PRR sides will be first, followed by other side styles.

River Raisin Models (6160 Upper Straits Blvd., West Bloomfield, MI 48033) showed brass pilot models of a 12-1-1 Pullman car and a PRR H-30 3-

bay hopper car. The production models, which also include a PRR H-32 5-bay hopper, will be imported by Overland Models.

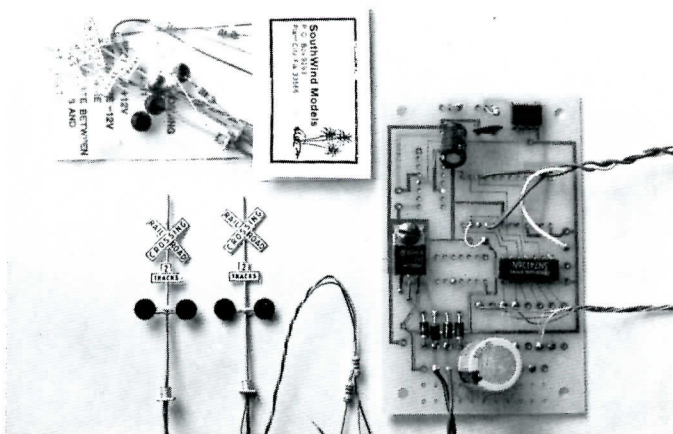
S Scale Locomotive & Supply (7120 Oreon Dr., St. Louis, MO 63121) has a full supply of one-side-pickup wheel-axle sets in stock at \$.85 per axle. Varieties available are 33" brass, 33" nickel-silver, 36" brass, and a few 36" nickel-silver. We have no samples, and so believe these to be made to the old NMRA wheel-axle standards. Write first to be sure.

Scenery Unlimited (310 Lathrop Ave., River Forest, IL 60305) had pilot models of their new #8 Shinohara standard-gauge turnout — really beautiful. Also on display was a sample of their new wood-side passenger car kit, based on B&M prototype. The kit is composed of epoxy resin castings with a wooden roof. Four versions are available: #S-101 (coach), S-102 (combine), S-103 (baggage), and S-104 (RPO), at \$39.95 less trucks. The kits make up into either open or closed vestibules. Scenery Unlimited also had on hand its new #s-100 small-town freight/passenger station kit, cast in plastic, at \$35.95 or two for \$68. Be sure to include \$2.75 postage & handling with each order.

SouthWind Models (P.O. Box 9293, Plant City, FL 33566) convention display: Pilot models of the PRR H31-b composite and H31-c all-steel rebuild twin hopper cars, to be produced in Nov.-Dec. 1988. Reading boxcar (freight version) with single air line and Bettendorf trucks. Two flatcars: a 53' Erie car and a PRR 51' welded-side flat.

Southwind also tells us that, in addition to the brass NYC baggage, combine, and 78' coach now being produced, the following brass passenger cars will be produced: 60' NYC railway post office (RPO), 78' smoker-observation with 4-wheel trucks, and a single-windows 78' coach (a la NYC) with 6-wheel trucks.

Also new from SouthWind are grade crossing flashers (\$12.99 per pair) and a warning flasher electronic control unit (\$24.95) which can control two



South Wind's crossing flashers are shown alongside their new flasher control unit.

Dick Karnes

pair of flashers. The factory-painted flashers appear to be properly proportioned and come with lettered crossbucks. Red LEDs (light-emitting diodes) provide the flashing; each is wired in series with a small resistor to limit LED current. The modeler must

provide a means to activate the unit (track trip, relay contact, etc.). Inexplicably, the instructions do not give allowable input voltage and current ranges. We checked with SouthWind, and they recommend a 12-volt DC power supply.



Bob Werre

Here is South Wind Models' pilot model of the PRR H31 - composite twin hopper car.

REVIEWER'S WORKBENCH

International Car Corp. Wide-Vision Caboose (Distributed by Modern Models, 711 Lowell St., Peabody, MA 01960; imported by Overland Models; built by Ajin in Korea. Two versions, \$99.95 plus \$3.00 postage direct only, or \$115 retail at your dealer's.)

We examined the "Type I" version, a D&RGW prototype. Similar cabooses are/were found on the B&M, BN, CB&Q, C&O, CV, D&H, GM&O, GN, ICG, L&N, MKT, MP, RF&P, RI, Rutland, SCL, Seaboard, SOO, etc. An enclosed parts pack permits customization to most any of these prototypes. There are also parts which allow you to update (vandal-proof) the caboose (window plugs, window screens, security grilles). An enclosed information sheet explains all these parts and where to install them, should you choose to do so. It also lists references where plans and photos of the prototypes can be found.

The "Type II" caboose has numerous differences from the Type I. It has different ends; end ladders and railings; end platform gratings; side window

size, shape, and placement; cupola side windows; cupola interior detail; roof style; smoke jack; generator power takeoff; tool box; etc. We did not inspect a Type II.

The information sheet lists several references for prototype data. We had access to one, the 1961 Car Builders' Cyclopedia, which shows only the Type II. Fortunately, we uncovered a copy of "Railroad Car Journal," No. 4, Kratville, Summer 1972, which is devoted to nothing but cabooses. There, in living color on the back cover, is a photo of the Rio Grande Type I caboose. While the roof paneling and overall car dimensions could not be checked against the photo, everything on the model appears to be properly proportioned and properly placed with respect to the photo. Parts in the photo which are not already on the model are included in the parts packs. The overall detail execution on the model is superb.

The model is solidly constructed of formed and stamped brass and nickle-silver (walkways), and is detailed with specially-made brass castings and formed wire. Features of special note are open-mesh

MORE →



The Modern Models caboose makes a fine addition to any layout. Shown is the Type I.

platforms, opening end doors, cupola window wipers, cupola interior detail (seats, railings), sliding cupola window sash, cast end ladders, truck-mounted generator and power take-off, full piping and brake detail, brass cast needle beams, and correct trucks. There is so much attention to detail that we continued to discover more and more tiny features even after several days' worth of periodic examinations. Among the seldom-modeled features is a chain hanging down from the brake-wheel stand. The cut lever (furnished in the parts package), when properly installed, passes through one of the bottom links in this chain. On the prototype, the brakeman can tug on the chain to uncouple the caboose without having to leave the end platform. The cut lever mounting bracket is also properly reproduced, allowing lateral motion as the coupler moves from side to side.

Soldering, neat overall, is a trifle sloppy at the end sills and under the end platforms. However, none of this will show under normal circumstances once the model is painted.

The highly-detailed cast-brass truck sideframes are a swing-motion leaf-spring design. The trucks are not actually sprung, but are equalized by having one sideframe pivoted on the truck bolster while the other is rigidly soldered. This arrangement seems to function well; the caboose tracked perfectly over 600' of main line and turnouts, all built to the old NMRA standard! The trucks' rolling qualities are

good. The non-magnetic nickel-plated wheel sets conform to the NASG standards gauge.

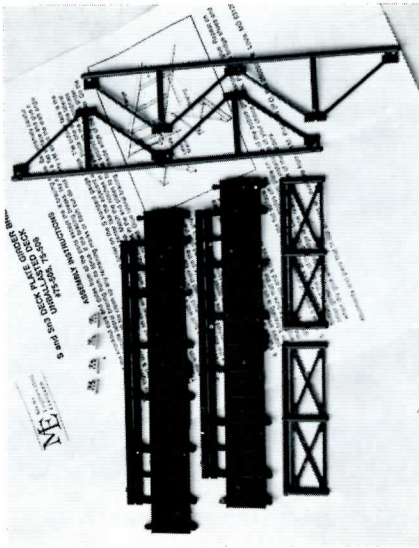
The information sheet states that some of the brake rigging might have to be bent slightly to allow the trucks to swing properly; we found this to be so with our sample. We also found that the wheel flanges contacted the bottom edges of the brass car ends during normal operation, creating a dead short. Thin washers (about 1/32") between the trucks and the carbody will solve this problem.

The coupler pockets are designed to house the Kadee S scale coupler draft gear box, and appropriate metric screws are enclosed in the parts packet. The screw holes are positioned to provide the proper extended coupler position typical of modern cushion-underframe cars. A plastic or cardstock shim between the bottom of the draft gear box and the brass coupler pocket is necessary to provide the required coupler height per the NASG coupler-height gauge. (Those thin washers inserted to prevent the wheel-flange short are necessary in addition to the shims in order to match the gauge.)

The Modern Models caboose is truly a fine model of exceptional value for the price. As of July 14, 1988, 31 Type I and 8 Type II cabooses are still available from Modern Models.

Sample Defects

Minor. The train air line was too long on one end,



These are the parts for the Micro Engineering 36' deck girder bridge kit.

and so projects below and beyond the end sill. End nipper pliers solve the problem quickly. The roof walk is slightly creased at one end of the end supports. One could unsolder it from the end support, straighten it with two small pliers, and resolder it. There was a small blob of solder next to one of the cupola window wiper mounts; this can be scraped away with a sharp X-Acto blade.

36' Deck Plate Girder Bridge Kit (Micro Engineering Co., 1120 Eagle Rd., Fenton, MO 63026, \$9.95 for either the #75-505 standard-gauge or #75-506 narrow-gauge kit, at your dealer.)

We built the standard-gauge kit. The kit consists of a set of detailed dull-grey plastic injection-molded castings plus four crisply-done soft-metal "shoes" (end support) castings. Instructions are brief and terse, requiring an exacting reading. The bridge assembles easily, however. Two cautions: The instructions say you can use either three or five cross-braces, but the kit includes just four. (Save one and use five on your next kit?) And there are four flange reinforcement castings. Use only two, on the bottom flanges. (I used all four, and had to file off the top ones.)

Even though one of the main girders in my kit was slightly warped, the assembly sequence and prototypical bracing make up into a perfectly square assembly. I used Testor's liquid plastic cement, applied with an artist's brush, and three rubber bands to hold everything in place. I weighted the entire assembly until the cement dried.

The finished bridge is delicate but strong. Rivets and detailing appear to be scale size. Stiffener spacing, closer toward the ends, is per correct civil engineering practice. This fine model fills a chronic need in S scale.

Sample Defects: None.



The Micro Engineering girder bridge helps fill a chronic need for bridge kits in S.

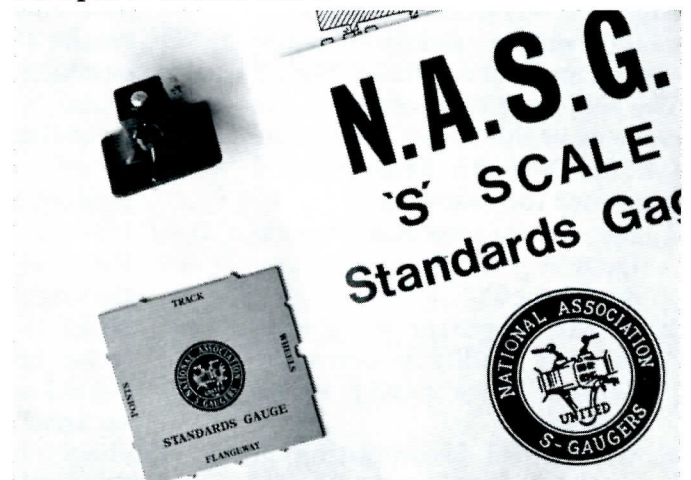
Track and Wheel Check Gauge (NASG Inc., 280 Gordon Rd., Matawan, NJ 07747; \$2.95 each (2 for \$5.00), plus \$1.00 postage.) The gauge is well-made from heavy-gage stainless steel. It's packed with a very informative instruction sheet which includes the official NASG S-3 and S-4 track and wheel standards, and detailed usage instructions and figures.

Here's what you can do with the gauge:

- Check track gauge
- Locate rails for spiking
- Check wheel spacing on axle
- Check for proper-thickness of wheels
- Check flangeway depth
- Check flangeway width at guardrails & frogs
- Locate guardrails for spiking
- Check switchpoint spacing from stock rail
- Locate switchpoint attachment to throwbar

We have no equipment of the sort necessary to check the accuracy of the gauge, so we've assumed that the dimensions are correct.

Sample Defects: None.



Shown here are NASG's new Track and Wheel Check Gauge and Coupler Height Gauge.

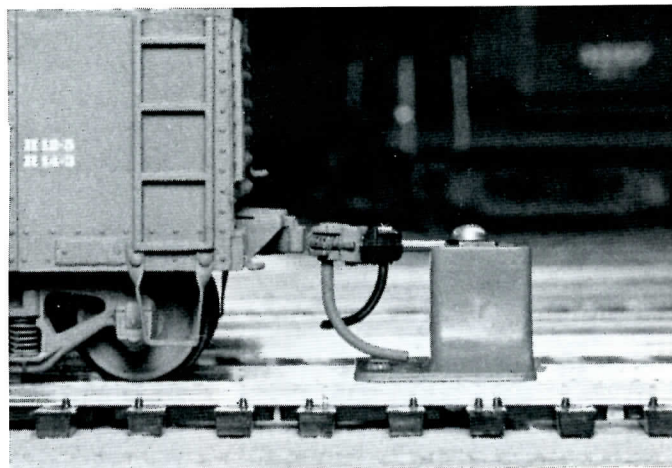
MORE →

Coupler Height Gauge (NASG Inc., 280 Gordon Rd., Matawan, NJ 07747; \$3.95 each (2 for \$7.50), plus \$1.00 postage.)

The new NASG coupler-height gauge is cast in red plastic (easy to spot on a cluttered workbench!) and comes with a Kadee HO coupler screw-mounted to the top. The plastic casting is sensibly designed to nestle between the rails of track, and will fit track built to either the NASG standard or the old NMRA standard.

To use the gauge, just couple it to the car you're going to check. The centers of the couplers should line up (as viewed from the side). If your car's coupler is too low, truck kingpin washers will correct the problem. If too high, a shim between the coupler draft gear box and the carbody will fix it. Beware the drooping coupler — it must be treated differently. Determine why the coupler droops (e.g., end sill not mounted squarely, floor not horizontal, etc.) and fix it.

The gauge also checks for proper uncoupling



Dick Karnes

Here's the NASG Coupler Height Gauge in use.

gladhand clearance. The gladhand must clear the top of the gauge's bottom platform. Once you have your coupler at the right height, the gladhand can be rebent as necessary to conform to the gauge.

Sample Defects: None.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MENOPAUSE?

One of the more interesting aspects of being the NASG President is the opportunity to write this column on a regular basis (more or less). I even fantasize that S gaugers around the nation actually read this column and perhaps act in the manner I suggest. After all — I am the President! Right?

One of the frustrations of being President is the feeling that no one reads "my" column, or if they do, the suggestions are ignored. After all — I'm only another S gauger with no ability to really control much of anything! Right? The subject of this column is the same as in the March 1988 issue: **CRITICISM**. In that issue I suggested the following:

1. Speak to the importer or manufacturer first regarding product defects.
2. If the importer or manufacturer readily resolves the defect, there really is no problem.
3. Widespread broadcasting of criticism serves no useful purpose unless steps 1 and 2 above have been attempted.
4. Manufacturers: Run the model

on a track for one minute before selling it.

Now it is September. Let's look at the results of the March "President's Message" with respect to the following:

1. The August **DISPATCH** contained a letter publically condemning a low-cost diesel locomotive that was recently released into the S marketplace. This criticism was broadcast without first contacting the manufacturer, as is now evident (see "Letters," this issue).
2. Apparently the manufacturer has solved all operational problems and is willing to "make things right" for the purchasers of his first twenty units.
3. In addition to the letter on the diesel, which criticized a product review for being too lenient, the August **DISPATCH** also has letters criticizing a product review for being too strict and another letter criticizing the use of NASG monies (which has not occurred as alleged), etc., etc.

I'm beginning to think that all S gaugers suffer from a severe case of collective menopause! If I purchase an automobile with a defect, I would talk to the dealer

or manufacturer before writing letters to TIME magazine. If I belong to an organization that isn't adhering to my personal views of its "proper role," I would contact an officer long before writing factually incorrect letters to a newspaper or other publication. Why can't we all go directly to the source of our problem or frustration first, and then, as a last resort, use the power of the pen if all else fails? Lest anyone out there feel I'm biased in favor of the manufacturer, let me relate some personal experiences and philosophies in that regard. There is no excuse for not track-testing products before they are sold. I've purchased a piece of motive power from an importer who publically stated all locomotives were track-tested. Mine didn't move an inch. Upon investigation, the motor lead wire was not attached to anything. Don't tell me that I got a track-tested locomotive!! However, it ran beautifully when the wire was properly connected. Was there a problem? Not in my eyes — except perhaps with a little exaggerated claim pertaining to track testing. In another instance, an importer signed his name to the box and stated his signature meant that

specific model had been personally inspected. As I unwrapped the cellophane, one of the trucks fell apart because the tiny screws that hold the bolster to the side frame were missing. Don't tell me I got an inspected freight car!! However, I was promptly sent the appropriate screws and now everything is fine. Was there a problem? Not in my eyes — except for an exaggerated claim pertaining to

personal inspection. In each case the problem was fixed promptly at no cost to me. Were these experiences worth a letter to the editor? — Not by my standards! It is this writer's opinion that the manufacturers themselves could prevent the problem of "unfair" criticism simply by track-testing the products being sold. If profit margins don't allow for an extra five minutes of labor, then charge an additional fee for track testing

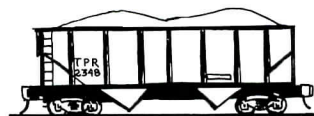
and debugging. This way the consumer could decide to either save a buck and take his chances or to spend a little extra and gain complete confidence the product will be totally satisfactory. There is no substitute for testing!

Ed Loizeaux

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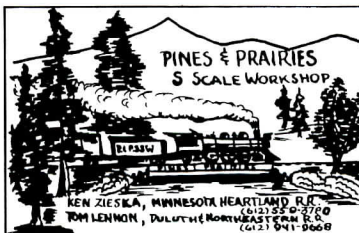
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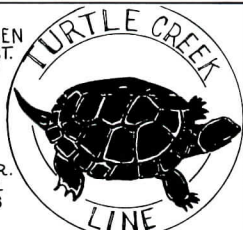
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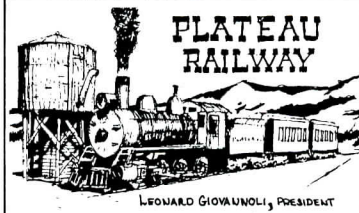


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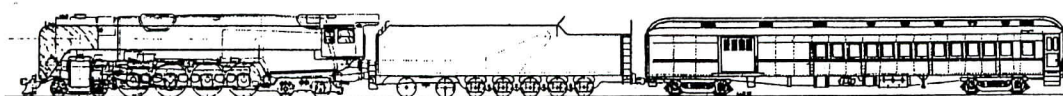
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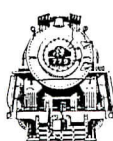


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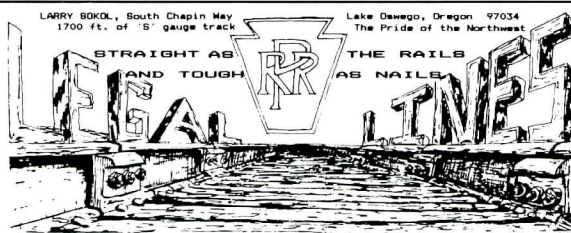
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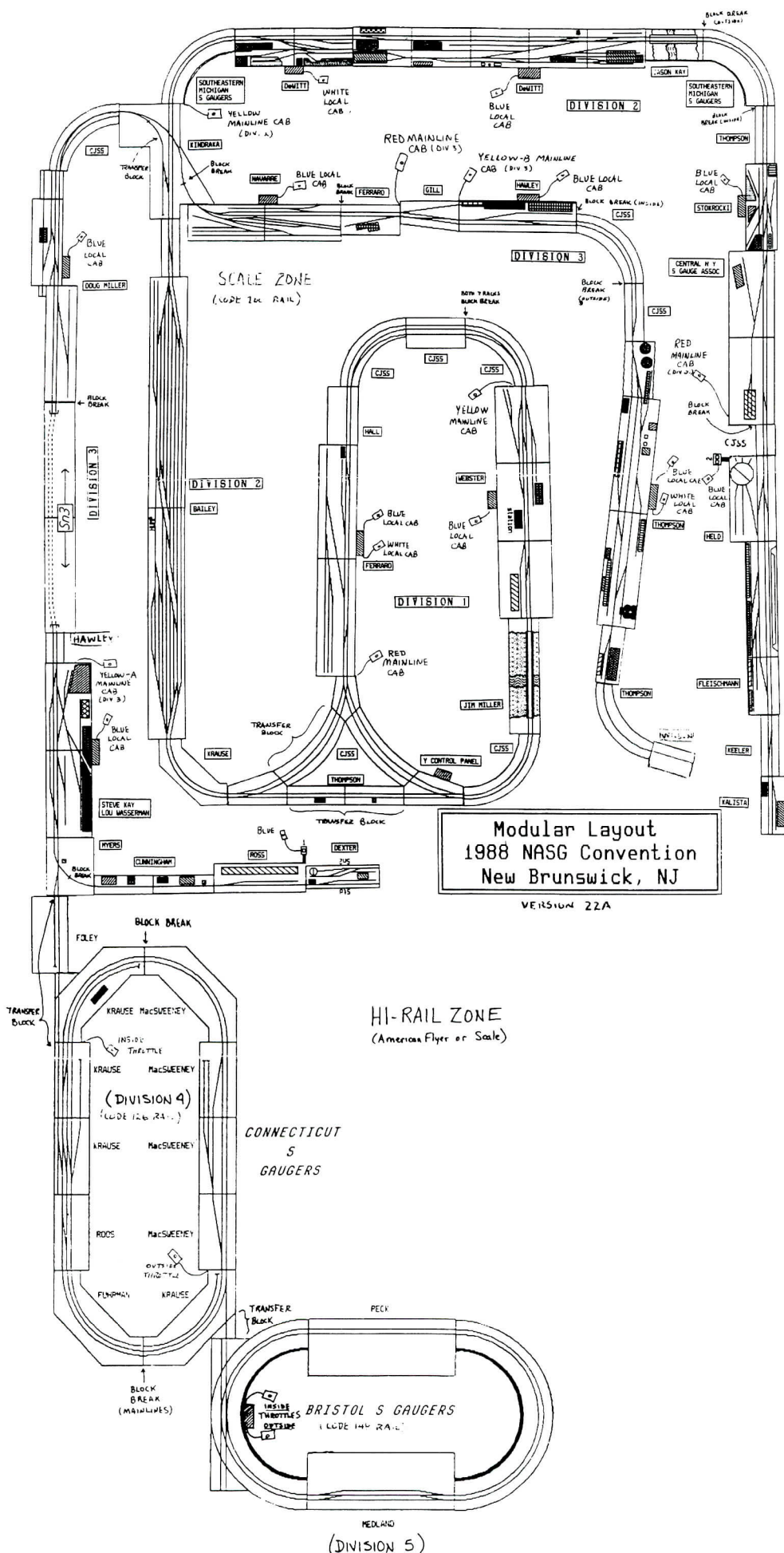
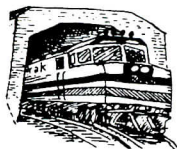
PEACH BOTTOM
RAILWAY



T. D. KERNS, Supt. WAYNESBURG, PA.

by Don DeWitt

Second, the NMRA has recently announced the approval of module standards for all scales. Unfortunately, I received several different stories from the NMRA module standards people, and as a result I recommended approval to the S scale NMRA members. There are several errors in the S scale standards for modules. They have assured me that they are willing to make the necessary changes so that the NMRA standards match our S-MOD system. They plan to propose the changes to the NMRA Board of Trustees at their January meeting. Hopefully these corrections will come to pass without difficulties. Until then, do not build modules using the S scale NMRA standards.



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SHORT & EASY

by Kent L. Singer

A LIGHT-DUTY RESISTANCE SOLDERING OUTFIT

Since the mid-Seventies I've been using a resistance soldering outfit made up of inexpensive components. Over the years, I've shown it to a number of friends, wrote it up in the S Scale circuit letter of which I'm a member, and given clinics on it to several S gauge clubs. It's a nice little tool to use for light duty soldering and happens to fit the requirements of the Short 'n' Easy project.

This outfit is useful for soldering small detail parts to larger pieces. Typically, I use it to attach clevises to brake rods, poling pocket rings to mounting plates, brake wheels to brake staffs, valves and other pipe fittings to wire (pipes), etc. Mounting engine components such as compressors, injectors, headlights, etc., to boilers and smokebox doors are other typical uses. It's ideal for fabricating small brass subassemblies.

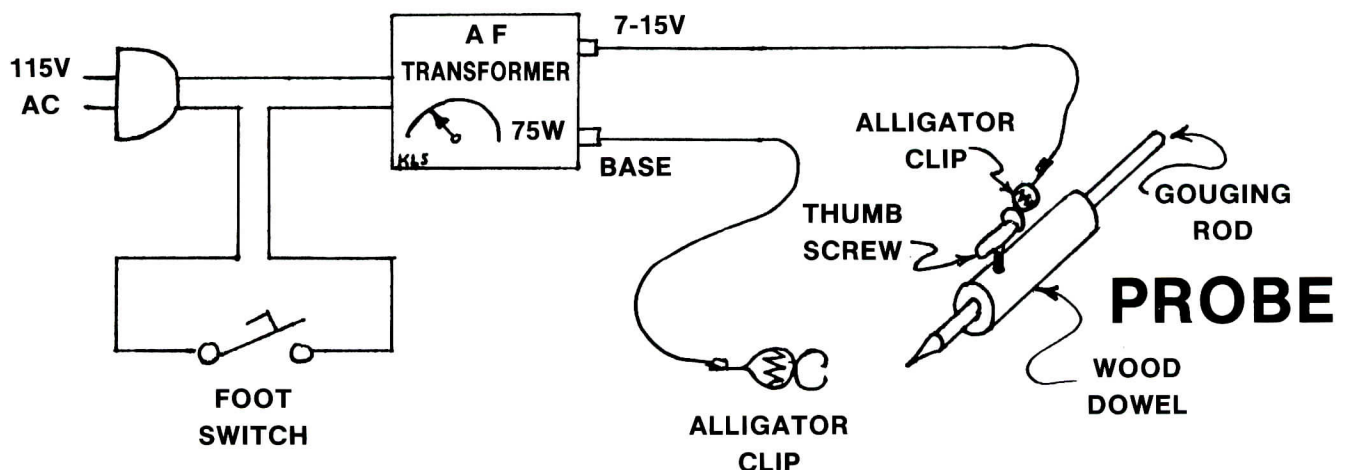
I keep the alligator clip which is connected to the base post of the transformer clipped to the small vise on the corner of my workbench. For most applications, I simply clamp the workpiece in the vise and apply heat with the probe (gouging rod). For workpieces that are awkward to fit into the vise, I move the alligator clip to a part on the workpiece.

I've always used S Scale Loco & Supply's Solder-In-Paste (#612.1). It's been said that this seems expensive (about \$3.50) for the small amount in the jar. However, experience shows that a jar lasts for a long, long time. The fact is that very little is actually needed to make a good soldered joint. One drop of Solder-In-Paste is plenty for for a joint whose surface area is half a square inch (believe it or not, in S scale, that's a lot of surface area).

Soldering Hints:

1. Good soldering practice requires that the workpiece be clean. A few passes with steel wool or a fine file will suffice for most tasks.
2. Plan for a good mechanical fit of the pieces to be soldered. This makes for the most successful joints.
3. Wherever possible, use a pinned joint. These are the strongest.
4. Keep a sharp point on the end of the probe (carbon rod). An ordinary pencil sharpener works well for this. The principle is that the carbon heats up due to resistance to current flow, then transfers its heat to the workpiece. The finer the point, the higher its temperature.
5. Fasten the base post (ground) clip to the larger of the two pieces to be soldered.
6. The steps are:
 - a) Hold the point of the probe to the joint.
 - b) Step on the foot switch.
 - c) As soon as the solder melts (typically 3 seconds or less), release the foot switch.
 - d) Remove the probe from the joint. Removing the probe before releasing the foot switch causes arcing resulting in pitted surfaces on the workpiece.
7. Solder-In-Paste contains an acid flux. Be sure to wash the soldered joint thoroughly with soap and water after soldering. An old toothbrush is fine for a scrub brush.

With one exception, the parts are simple and easy to find. American Flyer 75 watt transformers, alligator clips, wire, wooden dowels, and thumb screws are fairly common. Carbon gouging rods (1/4" diameter), copper clad or not, can be had cheaply at any welding supply house and may be available at hardware stores or Sears.



However, the foot switch is not a common household electrical item and is a little more difficult to find. Others have used extended-head momentary-contact pushbuttons or spring return toggle switches mounted appropriately (sometimes with a foot pedal) in a box to set on the floor. I've been using a 2" x 5" footpad (Foot Switch, Model III) made by Tapeswitch Corporation of America, 100 Schmitt Blvd., Farmingdale, NY 11735, (516) 694-6312.

GOT AN IDEA? *Perhaps you've created some detail to stick along your right-of-way, set on a loading dock, dress up a building, etc., etc. We're always looking for fresh projects. If you'd like to contribute, the rules are simple: The project should be somewhat related to railroading, and it should be capable of completion in one or two evenings. You needn't worry about drawings or photos — we can do them for you. All that's necessary is a sketch of the project with some dimensions, a list of the materials, and a short description of how to build it. Submit your ideas to:*

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105 Highland Dr.
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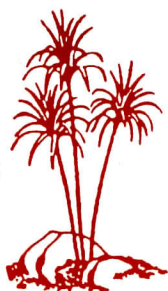


Our GP-9 Locomotive is based on the GP-9 Phase II Model. Included with each model are 48" fans, 36" fans and grillwork inserts to model the GP-9 phase III (pictured above) or the similar GP-18. This locomotive can be easily modified to many different prototype models from the GP-7 to the GP-20 high hood. See our line of locomotives, passenger cars, box cars, reefers, hoppers, gons, trackwork, etc. at your dealer. If there are no dealers in your area order direct. Send a 45¢ LSSAE for free information.

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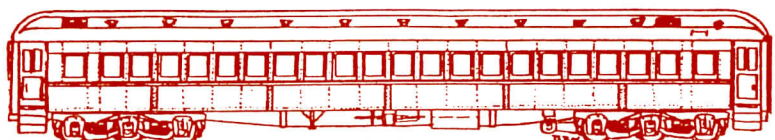


"S-SCALE"

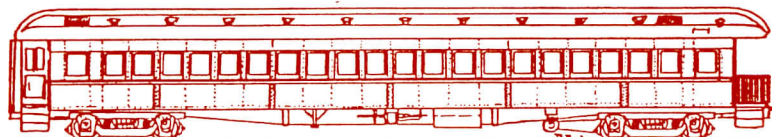
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