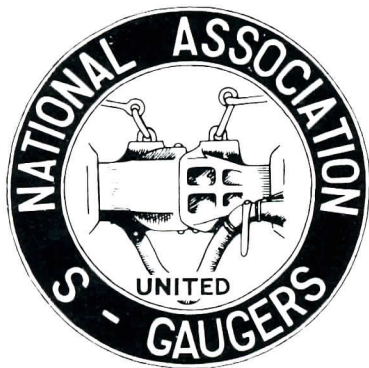
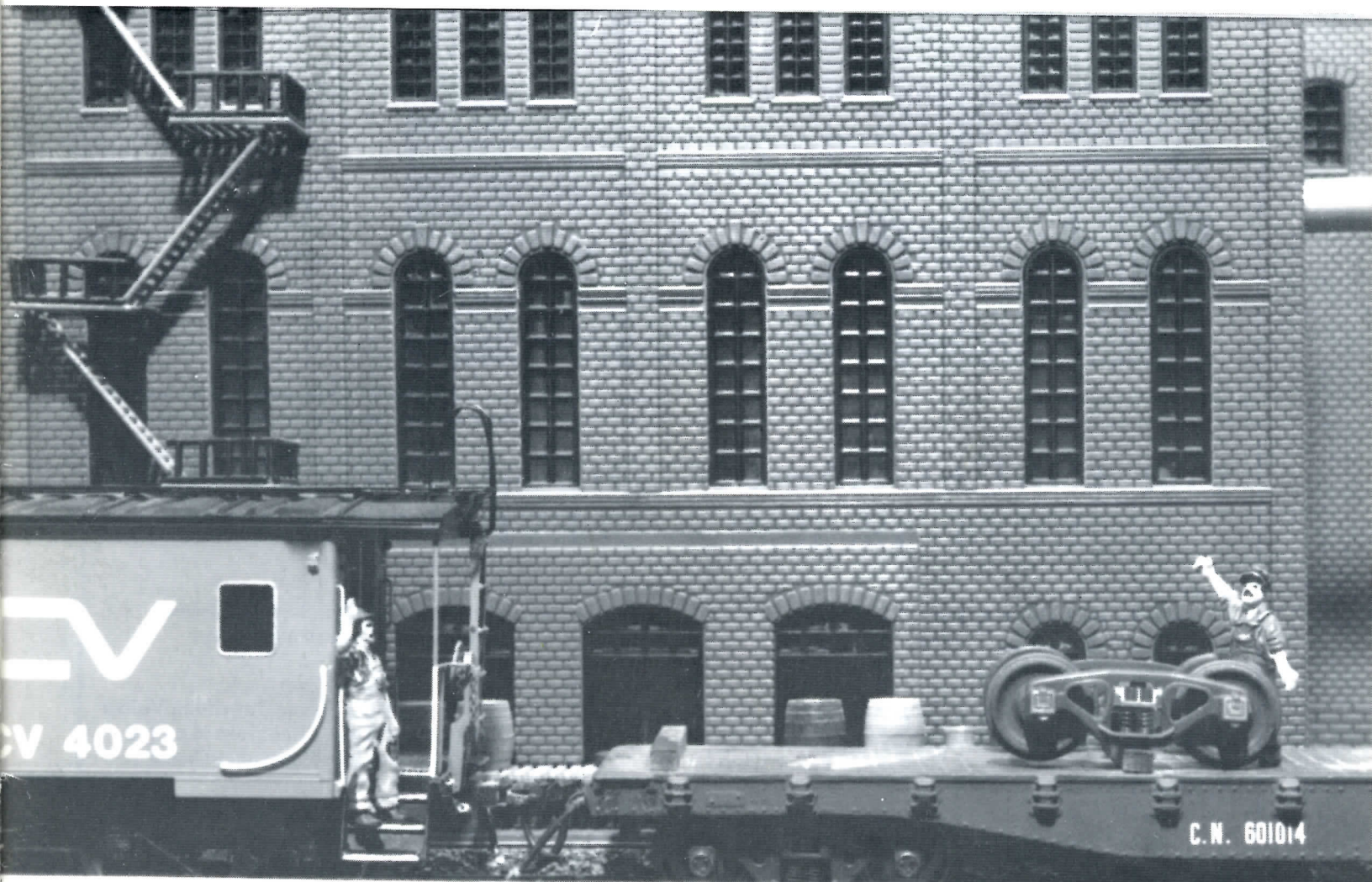
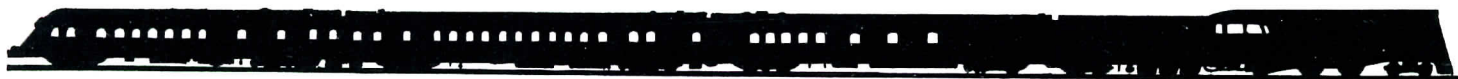




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DISPATCH



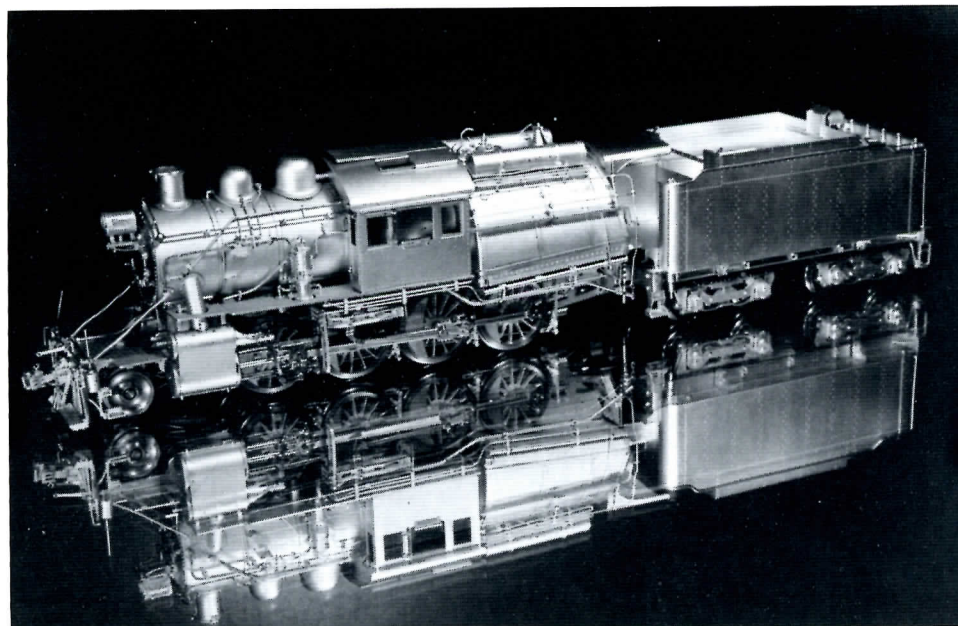
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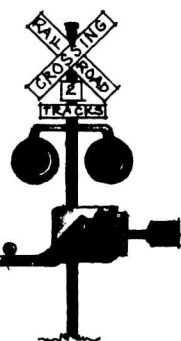
COVER

"Happy S Scale Railroading" is the photograph that won First Place in the Black and White category of the Photo Contest at the 1991 NASG National Convention in Syracuse. The photograph was entered by Denis Fortier of Cap A l'Aigle, PQ, Canada.

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President's Message

Lionel Trains has announced a new Lionel Train Visitor Center in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. It will be open to the public on February 10, 1992. Lionel Trains has personally sent me an invitation to the grand opening of the Train Visitor Center to be held on January 21, 1992. This will be a private viewing of the center with a special dinner. Lionel has sent only a select number of invitations to the hobby and club media. I was very proud to receive such an honor to attend this event. It really goes to show you the prestige our organization has obtained in the model train hobby field. It appears our effort in promoting S gauge is working and we have gained Lionel Trains attention.

Unfortunately, as a CPA this is the beginning of my busy season. Therefore, Moe Berk, our Executive Vice President, will attend and represent the NASG. This certainly will be a proud day for our organization.

Lionel has told me that over the last six months Lionel employees and local hobbyists have spent thousands of hours preparing a splendid presentation of trains from the past and present. Highlights of the 2000 square foot Visitor Center include a 600 square foot operating layout plus a display of currently produced trains and manufacturing processes. Also, there is a representation of archive items tracing back to 1900 and a theater featuring a 12 minute film on the history and production of Lionel trains. The Visitors Center is certain to be entertaining to children and adults of all ages. I highly recommend that our members visit the center in Mt. Clemens.

I also feel that if Lionel attends this year's NASG convention in Cleveland, we should express our thanks for their continued production of American Flyer and show them our warmest hospitality. Finally, I feel that input from our members to Lionel regarding our interests will help to see more items for S gauge being produced in the future.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Ferraro
President

From The Editor's Desk

It's time that S gaugers get real about Lionel Trains, Inc. We seem to continue to expect them to be something that they aren't. Or to do something that they can't.

Lionel is not, repeat not, a major force in model railroading. It hasn't been for at least 30 years, probably 40 is more like it. What it is, is a toy train company struggling to peddle nostalgia. I say struggling because nostalgia is intrinsically difficult to peddle over extended time. We tend to change what we are nostalgic about, sometimes very rapidly. Struggling because the toy train market is a seasonal one centered almost exclusively around the Christmas season, and for three Christmases in a row the market has been depressed. Struggling because the toy train market was re-invented only a few years ago by LGB, and Lionel, with all of its lines, is really not in that game, whether they would want to be or not.

The point is made by Jim Sleeth that Lionel has lost market share to other manufacturers in O gauge. It may be true. I don't know the statistics. The larger truth seems to me to be that Lionel is not really in direct competition with Weaver, or Right-of-Way, or Williams, or even with K-Line. None of those companies makes a venerated product tied to a long and illustrious history. They are making model trains, although some are a bit toy-like. Lionel is making collectible bits of memories past, images of other times which just happen to look like trains and run on tin-plate track. They and they alone occupy an utterly unique market niche. It is important that they have a backwards-looking technology, otherwise they would not evoke the nostalgia so essential to their marketability. Of course they aim both Lionel and American Flyer at the collector, they can't really do otherwise. To do so would be to fail.

We should stop complaining about that. There is nothing dishonorable or scurrilous in aiming at the collector's market. If people are buying their products then they are serving somebody's needs. That they don't upgrade or modernize their products to suit other's needs is irrelevant.

To exhort them to mass produce in order to sell at lower cost is almost surely to invite them to go bankrupt. Their product is not competitive in the mass market and they know it. That game was lost years ago to HO. So, let's let the collectors enjoy what Lionel produces and let's let Lionel Trains go on about peddling nostalgia. Nobody's hurting.

COMMAND CONTROL IN S SCALE

Bob Jackson

We have earlier presented three installments of a series by John Long on the installation of the ONBOARD system of command control in various S scale locomotives. I want to interrupt this series with a very general discussion of command control, together with a general discussion of ONBOARD. Later we will return to a specific concern with the use of ONBOARD in S scale. It may seem like we got the cart before the horse but chalk it up to the fact that the series began before I became the editor of *The Dispatch*.

I have discussed command control with perhaps a dozen S gaugers who either are using it or are making a move toward using it. Though nothing like a legitimate survey has been made, my inquiries lead me to believe that ONBOARD enjoys some favor in S scale. Upon completion of this series I would like to continue with a discussion of the use of other systems by S gaugers. Thus, I am requesting that all those who use or are in the process of installing command control to write me about their experiences with the system they have chosen. I would like to develop a "seminar" for the pages of *The Dispatch* on the subject.

Command control, also known as carrier control, is a system of operating control in which signals or "commands" are passed through the rails to electronic devices in the individual locomotives or slave units attached permanently to them. The electronic devices recognize signals that are unique for the locomotive in which they are installed. No other locomotive will respond to those signals unless it has a device that is "tuned" to respond in identically the same way. Upon receipt of the signals

the devices will either increase or decrease the voltage to the motor or reverse the polarity of the electricity reaching the motor. The voltage on the track remains constant; most systems appear to have adopted DC current at around 15 volts as standard. However, what is really important here is simply that the track voltage is constant. So too is the polarity, except in those situations, such as reversing loops, requiring a deliberate change of polarity in a particular section of the track.

Command control has been in use in model railroading for many years. The first commercially available system available to model rails was probably ASTRAC (tm), developed by General Electric, which appeared in the '60s for a brief time. It was limited in its capabilities, was not especially reliable, and left the scene in a comparatively short time. Command control should not be confused with radio control. There are no radio frequencies which play a part in the essential workings of command control. However, it is possible to use radio control in conjunction with command control.

The essential elements of a command control system are 1) a power supply unit which supplies electricity of the proper voltage. In the majority of cases this is an AC transformer which supplies a low voltage of around 18 volts to the system. 2) a unit which performs several tasks in combination and goes by different names depending on the manufacturer. At its simplest, this unit converts the electricity to be supplied to the track to DC and multiplexes that with the signals which will be sent to the individual locomotives. Both 1) and 2) may be combined into a single

unit. 3) a signal generator and controller which may be a hand-held device which can be plugged in at various stations along the route of the train. This is the device which each engineer uses to control the direction of his or her locomotive and the speed at which it moves. These devices can be tuned in one of several ways which differ according to the manufacturer. In some cases, these controllers can perform more functions than merely those of directional and speed control. 4) a receiving unit which receives only the signals for which it is tuned (or programmed) and changes the polarity and adjusts the voltage supplied as directed by the operator. This receiving unit is placed in the locomotive or in a railcar when there is not enough room in the locomotive itself. In the latter case the railcar must be permanently attached to the locomotive.

Today there are three principal types of command control in use. One is represented by Zero-1 which is manufactured by Hornby, a British firm. It differs from the others in that it is in effect a computer system which requires AC on the track at about 22 volts. The control signals are digital pulses generated by a microprocessor. While it is a highly sophisticated system it doesn't appear at this writing to have gained the level of acceptance that other systems have. That may be due in part to the fact that it does not feature easy use of walk-around control. The other two supply DC to the rail but differ in the nature of the signal sent to the electronic devices in the locomotive. One type is digital which in so many words means that the receiving device will only respond to the correct number of electrical pulses, called the pulse width, assigned to

it and to none other. The other type uses a sound frequency system similar in principal to those tones you hear in a touch-tone telephone. The receiver will respond only to the sound frequency for which it is precisely tuned. The most common digital system is also probably the most dominant command control system, it is the CTC-16 system or one of its several variants which now include CTC-80 and Mann Made as well as others. The CTC-16 has been available in kit form which reduces cost and appeals to many. That, together with the fact that it has been heavily promoted by Model Railroader and other Kalmbach publications, likely accounts for much of its popularity.

Most recently, Marklin has entered the market with a digital system which according to the ads permits gradual transition to command control while continuing operation with an older system. I have not had an opportunity to examine the Marklin system at this time and cannot comment on it.

As far as we are aware, at this writing, only two manufactures employ sound frequency systems. These are DYNATROL made by Power Systems Incorporated and ON-BOARD made by Keller Engineering. To this point only ONBOARD also features a sound system that may, in suitable circumstances, also be mounted in the locomotive.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each system and it is not the purpose of this article to go into that matter. That has been done several times in commercial articles.

Our focus, at the moment, is to present the general considerations in using command control with a special concern with the ONBOARD system. We will continue with John's installation articles in following issues and extend them as our experience grows. We also wish to publish the distilled experience of all S Gaugers with the ONBOARD (and with other sys-

tems if we can get enough of a response.)

Probably the most attractive feature of command control is that it permits individual control of each locomotive in a highly flexible way. Therefore, each locomotive can be operated in a manner very like the real item. It is true that individual locomotives can also be individually operated in the more conventional cab control system. However, this requires a complex system of block wiring which must be managed in order to hand off control to individual locomotives within the blocks. Even then locomotives in multiple lashups cannot be operated individually but must be regarded as a single operating unit within the block. Care must be taken to see that double- or multiple-headed locomotives are compatible under a wide range of operating conditions. Mid-train helpers pose a very difficult challenge to conventional cab operation. Command control makes these operational challenges easier to meet since every locomotive in the lashup can be individually controlled.

Parallel to flexible operation is the benefit of eliminating the complex block wiring and management of conventional cab control. There is no need for numerous blocks and the switching of power between them in command control. Hence wiring your railroad is a far less complex matter with command control. That is not to say however that there is no complexity to wiring for command control; it introduces its own complexity which will be addressed later.

Though it is a matter of personal taste, I find a very great benefit in command control in being able to move around with my train and be directly involved with it. True, that it is also possible with walk-around control used with other systems, but, again, much less flexibly. I don't have to bother with seeing that I have power in the block that I want to operate in (or have a dispatcher see that I have power where I want to be.) In command

control power is everywhere at all times, all I have to do is control the speed and direction of my locomotive. I am in command.

All things have a cost, nothing is free. So it is with command control. It is expensive: there is a first time cost which includes obtaining the power/multiplexer supply, at least one controller, and at least one receiver. That will provide for operation of one locomotive and will cost several hundred dollars, the exact cost depending on the system you purchase. After that a controller must be provided for each person that you expect to operate simultaneously on the railroad and a receiver for each locomotive that will operate by command control. Expect to pay in the range of \$75 to \$175 for each controller and \$50 to \$80 dollars for each receiver depending on the amperage rating required. (These are 1991 prices, who knows what they will be in the future.)

If you are just starting out and have little cost sunk in another kind of operating system, much of that cost will be balanced against the savings realized from not having to pay for the complex wiring and management of that complexity. Nevertheless, most model railroads will not increase beyond a certain point of complexity and thus the associated cost will also be limited. If the typical layout with many, many locomotives were to employ command control, the cost of outfitting a large number of locomotives with receivers would drive the cost of using command control beyond the savings realized from simpler wiring. Obviously, those costs are controllable by the model railroader. It is rare that a model railroad, to provide really effective and satisfying operation, really needs all the locomotives that most owners acquire. Operation is what command control is all about and when a railroad is designed around realistic operation (and avoids the temptation to have at least one of everything ever made) it is possible to have one with command control operation at a cost that is not much

more than one with conventional cab control.

Another kind of cost is the time and effort spent in installing the receivers in each locomotive. This is a more challenging exercise than one may at first appreciate. We have presented some articles on specific installations of ONBOARD and others will be presented later. However, whether you use ONBOARD or some other system, you will encounter the need to rewire at least some aspects of your locomotives and provide suitable placement of the receiver within the locomotive. Even in locomotives the size of S scale there will be examples where it is difficult to find the space needed.

Layout wiring in command control must be of the highest quality. Poor joints, temporary fixes, and inappropriate wire size can seriously degrade the performance of any command control system. The statement should apply to any system but the problems generated in command control by poorly done wiring are magnified especially because the expectations of it are higher. Anything that degrades or significantly alters the signal that the locomotive should receive can result in a missed or misinterpreted command. In this same connection, the rail must be kept quite clean. This is always an important consideration but, with command control it assumes even greater importance. Dirt on the rail has the potential of interfering with the pulse width in the digital systems and thus altering the "command" to the locomotive. This is less of a problem with the sound frequency systems but they have their own susceptibilities to dirt.

Let us turn now to a consideration of the ONBOARD system itself. First note that the full name is ONBOARD Sound and Control System. Without question the feature which most clearly distinguishes this system from all others is the ability to provide sound within the locomotive (or an attached railcar)

itself. This is also perhaps the most compelling reason to buy it in preference to other systems. However, ONBOARD represents a fully developed control system which not only provides locomotive control but also directional lighting and complete track signaling capability, including occupancy detection and signal lighting. We are going to consider only those aspects related to command control of the locomotives. If you wish to learn more about the total offering represented by ONBOARD, you should contact Keller Engineering, 200 San Mateo Avenue, Los Gatos, CA 95030.

As noted above, ONBOARD employs high frequency sounds as controlling signals. Keller Engineering refers to this as a tone-link system. Earlier applications of this technology suffered from the tendency of the sound frequencies to drift or go "off-tune". That is no longer a problem, if it were you would find this to be a common problem with touch-tone telephones. As you know, these are highly reliable devices in use by the millions. One advantage to the use of a tone-link signal as compared to a pulse width signal is that it is less troubled by dirty track. As long as your locomotive can receive a signal it will receive the correct one. One theoretical disadvantage to a tone-link system is that the number of different signals that can be received is limited by the need to have considerable "spacing" between the frequencies that distinguish one tone from another. They ONBOARD system permits 80 distinctive frequency bands which they call channels. A number of these are used by other aspects of the system, including its signature onboard sound system, which limits the number of channels for locomotive control to 20. As a practical matter, 20 individually controlled locomotives is hardly ever a real limitation in model railroading.

A minimum ONBOARD system includes 1) A power transformer which provides 18 volts of AC electricity. This you can supply yourself

from any source, just be sure that it has at least a 5 amp rating to ensure adequate capacity for all but very large railroads. You can also obtain a suitable transformer from Keller Engineering. 2) A mixer, of either 5 amp or 10 amp rating. The mixer is what Keller calls the device which produces DC track power and mixes the controlling signals with it. 3) A controller, which Keller calls a keypad. There are two types available. One controls a single locomotive, the other controls two locomotives simultaneously for double-headed lashups. Both have selectors which permits them to be "tuned" to any of the 20 available channels. 4) A receiver which Keller calls a throttle since that is the function that it really serves. Throttles are mounted in locomotives and are responsive to a single fixed channel which is set at the time of manufacture.

Obviously, no railroad will want to operate with merely the minimum system and will add a keypad for each anticipated operator. It will also add throttles to each locomotive to be operated by the ONBOARD system.

As noted above, keypads are available as two types, a single control model and a dual control model. Both types feature four control buttons (keys) which sound the bell, blow the horn or whistle, and adjust the speed in either a forward or reverse direction. The single control model has a tiny rotary switch which is used to select one of the 20 channels available. This is the means by which the keypad may be used to control any locomotive. The dual control keypad has two such rotary switches and can be used to select two different locomotives to receive the same commands. It can also be used to provide separate commands to two different locomotives. It is important to note that the speed control changes the memory in the throttle within the locomotive. Thus, for any setting, the locomotive will "remember" the setting even if no further signal is received and will continue moving at the selected speed until signaled to

change. This flexibility permits unplugging the keypad and moving to operate from any position where there is a plug available. The same keypads are used for all scales and there are no special considerations for use in S scale.

Throttles are available in several amperage ratings; 1 amp, 2 amp and 4 amp. I cannot conceive of a need for a 4 amp throttle in S scale given the efficiency of today's small motors. Possibly some old steam engine models running early Pittman or imported open frame motors would tax a 2 amp throttle. On the other hand should someone envision running American Flyer with ONBOARD the only safe bet is very likely a 4 amp throttle. Keller Engineering recommends a 2 amp throttle for use in S scale but that is undoubtedly a very conservative recommendation. Few of the contemporary locomotives with efficient can motors will need even that large a throttle. The truth is that the typical motor in use in S scale locos today are much closer to those used in HO than to the larger scales. Rarely will they draw as much as even 1 amp under typical conditions, most will draw less than 1/2 an amp. Hence, the 1 amp throttle is more than adequate for a large selection of locomotives. This conclusion is bolstered by the knowledge that Bob Werre successfully uses DYNATROL 3/4ths amp receivers in a number of his S scale locomotives. However, be conservative and don't take my word for it—check it out for yourselves with the locomotives that you propose to install the ONBOARD throttles in.

In checking out the current draw of your motors it is very important to measure the current under conditions of maximum load or at point of stall under full power. To measure the current otherwise will give a false impression of the actual draw of the motor. To give a fair estimate of the current draw under heavy operating conditions for a particular locomotive, it should be measured with the locomotive pulling a the heaviest load it can

manage on a grade suitably long to give a clear reading of the ammeter. The locomotive should be just at the point of wheel slip when this reading is taken (I am assuming that you have not weighted your locomotives so heavily that they are unable to spin their wheels under any circumstance.) If the motor is free, not installed in the locomotive, measure the amperage by running the motor at 10 volts and pinching the shaft between your thumb and forefinger. Measure the amperage just at the point the motor is about to stall from the pinching pressure. If the current draw is less than half an ampere under maximum load you are probably safe in using a 1 amp throttle. Few can motors in current use in S scale will approach even half an amp under the described conditions. Nevertheless, if you encounter a situation in which the amperage begins to approach three-fourths of an amp or more then it would be better to be safe and use the 2 amp throttle.

Why, if the motor current draw under maximum load is less than 1 amp can't you use a 1 amp throttle in every case? Well, the chances are, if you are using modern, highly efficient motors, that you probably can. However, the meters that most of us use for these purposes are incapable of giving a reading of the starting current or of current spikes under pulsed voltage. They merely provide average readings which for most of our hobby purposes is entirely adequate. Command control systems operate these motors under so-called duty cycle conditions which means that the power is supplied in narrowly spaced pulses. Pulse currents are developed, which under starting conditions, when the inertia of the armature and shaft must be overcome, can be comparatively large and could damage the throttle if you choose one that provides little reserve.

It is well that many S scale locomotives can satisfactorily employ throttles of 1 amp because despite the relative size of S scale, many would not have room for the 2 amp

throttles. The diesel yard switchers, for example, would not readily accept this size throttle without some fairly serious re-working of the internal sheet metal or reconfiguring of the throttle itself. Both are possible but that is beyond the scope of this article. In any event, the 1 amp throttle can work quite suitably in these applications. John Long has recounted or will recount his experiences in fitting the 2 amp throttles in several S scale locomotives. It has required some serious shoe-horning in certain instances. The American Models locos, for example, provide a surprising challenge to placement of a 2 amp throttle because the drive mechanism takes up more room than one initially suspects.

The mixer in the ONBOARD system is essentially a DC power supply which multiplexes control signals with its DC output. Mixers are available in 5 amp and 10 amp ratings. There are no special considerations that are unique to S scale. The 5 amp mixer will be adequate for the vast majority of S scale railroads. Only those very large layouts or those with an unusually large number of locomotives operating simultaneously need to consider a 10 amp mixer.

I have already noted the importance of good layout wiring for command control. At this point, it is worthwhile examining some of the general recommendations made by Keller Engineering. These will have application beyond the ONBOARD system. John Long will, in a subsequent article, also share his experience at wiring his railroad.

Because the "command" must reach the throttle unimpaired and undiminished, it is essential that there be no significant loss in the distribution system. The peculiarities of duty-cycle power supply can lead to some pulse currents that exceed 5 amps. This is no problem for the mixer since it is designed to cope with such events. However, if the distribution wiring is too small, such large pulse currents can lead

to voltage drop pulses that can affect speed control. Keller recommends a rule of thumb in which the electrical resistance of the power bus from the mixer to the farthest point and back (!) be less than 1/10th of an Ohm. Thus, in an example in which the out-and-back distance of the distribution bus was 100 feet, you would need to use wire which had a resistance of 0.0010 Ohms per foot or less. It happens that #10 copper wire has a resistance of 0.0010 Ohms per foot and would be the wire of choice in the example. In no case should a power bus be smaller than #16 gauge and this would be used only on very small railroads.

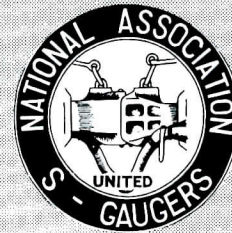
The example of my own railroad may be useful in illustrating how one has to use a different approach in designing a distribution bus for command control. My railroad is a point-to-point design which is physically similar to the Canandaigua Southern in that it employs a spiral in the center of an around the walls arrangement. However, unlike the CS, it is not a closed loop, instead it is open at one point and, thus, is a true walk-in railroad. It is approximately 240 feet between the farthest points of the two ends. Therefore, a command control distribution system has to confront a total out-and-back distance of 480 feet. If the mixer were placed at one end, near the yards for example, it would be necessary for the bus wire to have a resistance of approximately 0.0002 Ohms per foot in order for the total resistance of the bus not to exceed 0.1 Ohm. No such wire is readily available to the model-railroader-on-the-street. The commonly available #10 copper wire has a resistance of 0.001 Ohms per foot, a resistance 5 times greater than required. If the mixer were placed in the middle, equidistant from each end, then a bus leading each way would only have half the out-and-back distance. In this case, the resistance of the wire could be as high as 0.0004 Ohms per foot. Unfortunately, that is still outside the range of commonly available wire. (This discussion ignores the

extreme expense and great intractability of copper wire of the dimension required for such low resistance.) My answer to the problem was to design a "star" type of distribution system with 6 distribution buses leading from a geographically centered mixer. Theoretically, then, each bus would be 80 feet long, out-and-back, and the resistance of the bus wire could be as high as 0.00125 Ohms per foot, easily more than #10 wire. I am just now in the process of stringing #10 wire along those 6 distribution buses. Each of them is a block which serves the purpose of isolating problems to block regions should they arise. They will, however, not be operated as individual blocks as would be the case with a cab control system. Indeed, they can't be since there is no management system; they can only be turned on or off.

Feeder wires from the bus to the track can also be a source of problems if they are of too small size or if they occur at too great an interval. Keller recommends that the locomotive should never be more than 10 feet from a feeder. Feeders can be made from light wire, such as #22, if they are soldered to the track and are then only a few inches long before connecting to the power bus or to a longer feeder of considerably heavier gauge.

Finally, the rail sections themselves must have solid electrical connections. Keller recommends C-shaped jumpers soldered around rail joiners to insure electrical continuity without the expansion problems arising from soldering all rail joints. These can be of a rather light gauge.

As you can see, there is a level of complexity associated with command control wiring after all. In truth, though, all of the concerns which MUST be addressed in command control, should also be addressed in voltage level controlled systems for the best and most reliable results. Command control is simply less forgiving.



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Glen Sponholtz's LARAMIE AND NORTH PARK RAILWAY

Bob Jackson
Photos by Author

Glenn Sponholtz is very tall. So is his Laramie and North Park Railway. Don Thompson kept skinning his nose on the edge of it as the NASG crew took a tour of Glenn's railroad in July, 1991. In places, even my 6' 2" frame strained to see into the scene. However, its height seems quite reasonable when Glenn stands next to it. Moreover, it seems quite in keeping with the theme of Colorado mountain and meadow railroading which the Laramie and North Park evokes.

Glenn's railroad is a C-shaped dog-bone wrapped around four walls of his basement in Westminster, Colorado, a suburb of Denver. Conceptually it is a branchline railroad; it has a certain sort of narrow gauge feel although it is in fact a standard gauge railroad. The feel comes from the array of

small rural and rustic scenes that at present constitute the principal scenery of the L&NP. Glenn has a particular gift for creating these well detailed scenes with, in fact, a very economic use of materials. Note in particular, the interior of the engine house in one photograph.

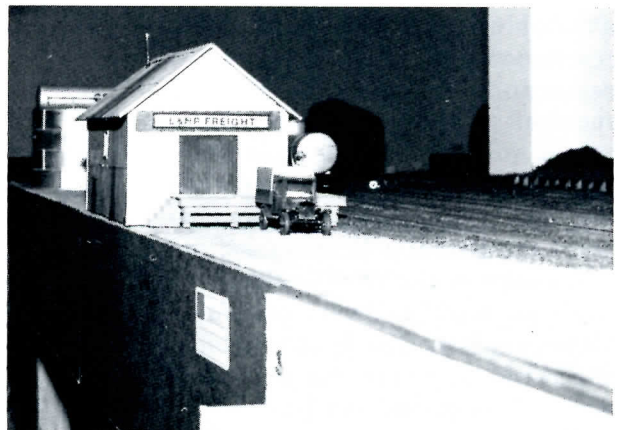
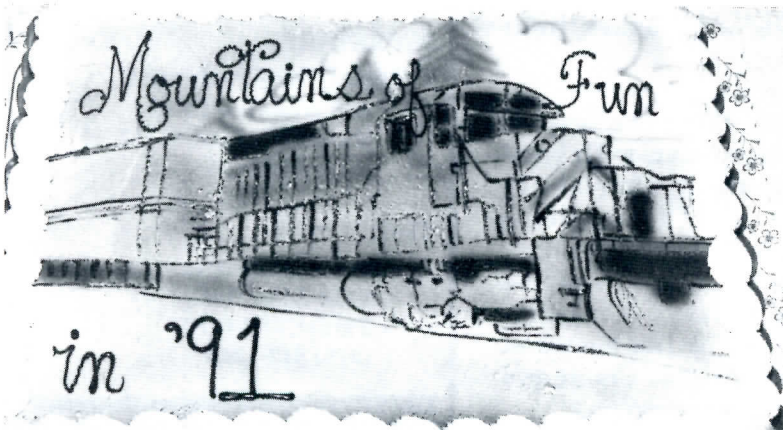
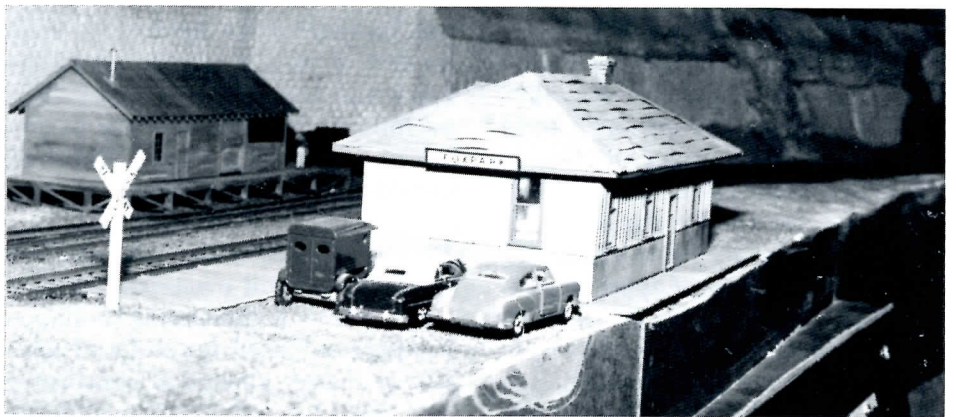
He also has a particular talent for including local materials which materially contributes to the feel of the railroad. Examples of this are found in the ballast around the trackage and at the base of the abutments of the trestle in one photograph. Another example shows clearly in the retaining walls associated with the minehead in another photograph.

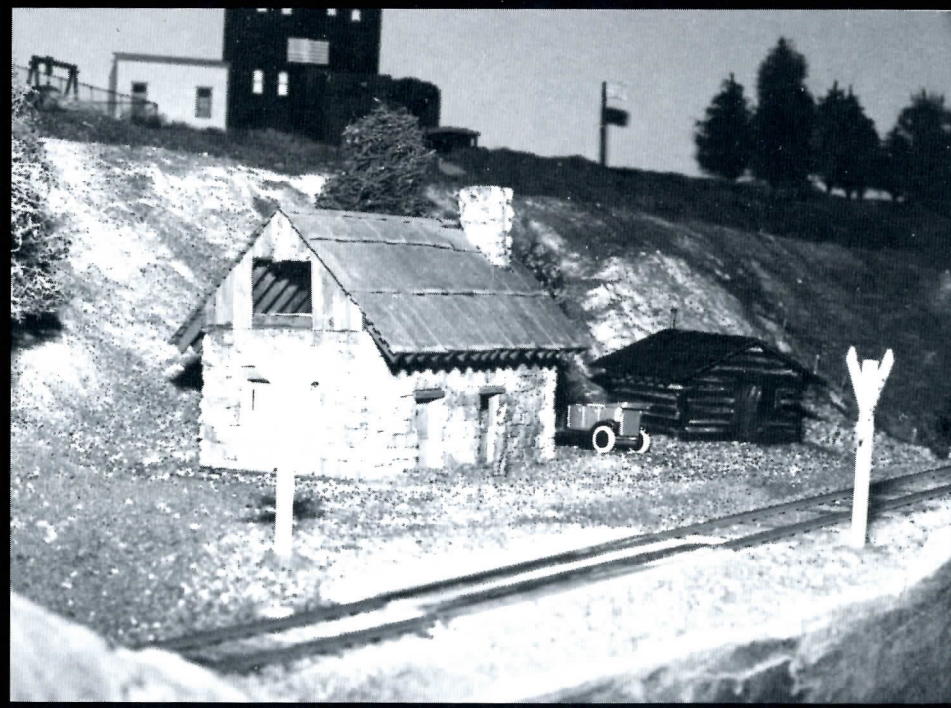
The faithfulness of the execution of the L&NP to its concept leaves one

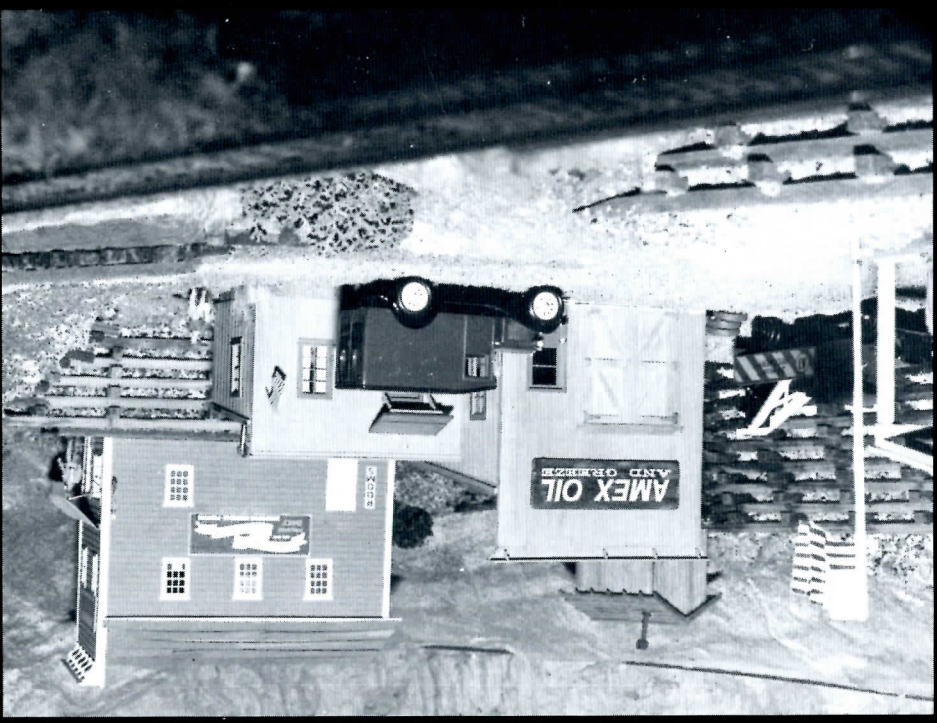
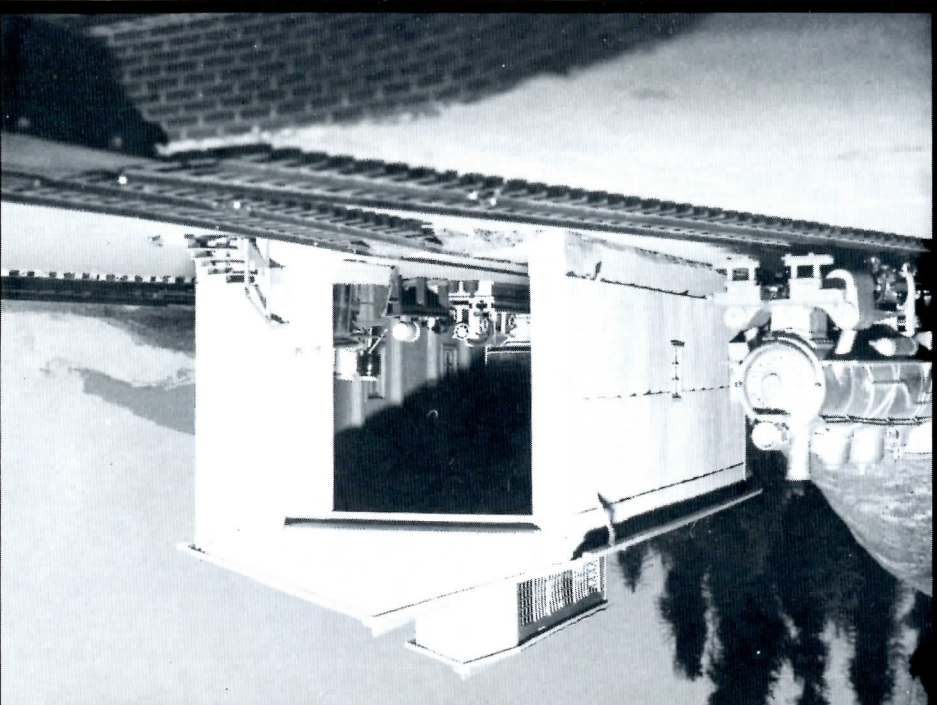
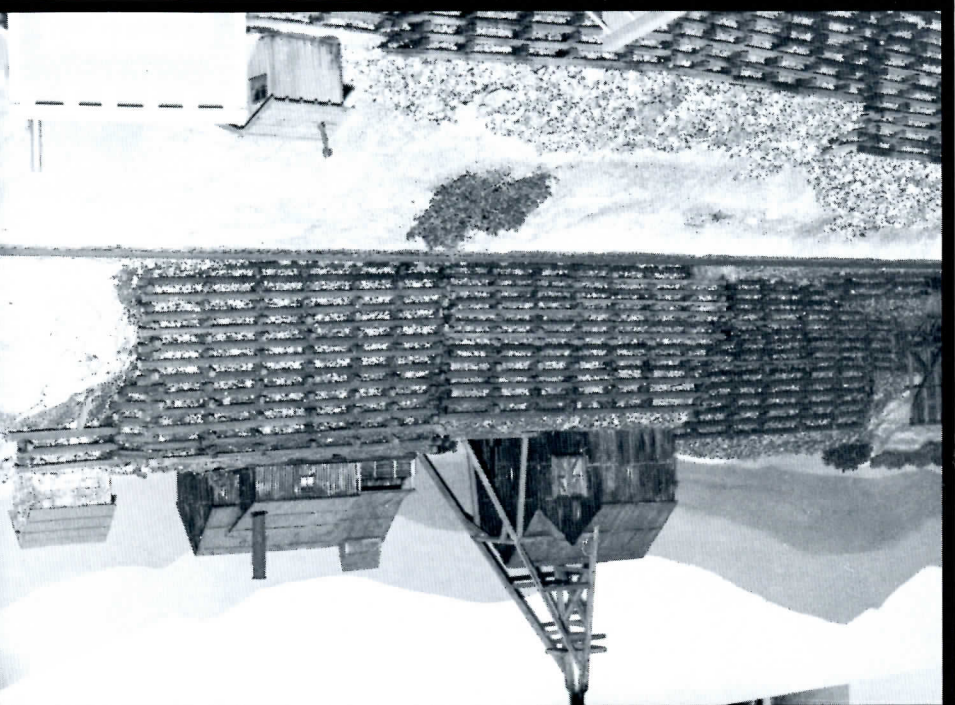
with a very pleasing impression. The L&NP deserves to be visited again, soon, to observe Glenn's progress in building it.

Our tour was made even more pleasant by the presence of members of the Mountain Empire S Scale Association and by the serving of a specially decorated cake by Mrs. Sponholtz.

(Editor's Note: We have been informed following completion of this article that the L&NP is to be dismantled to make way for a mainline concept railroad. We are sorry that we will never see the fully mature L&NP but we are sure that Glenn's skills and artistic feel will bring forth a new railroad that will rank high among S scale railroads in quality and accomplishment.)







S LORE

I noticed in the Lionel catalog that they have expanded their line of highway semi's, and are now offering the trailer boxes separately for use as containers. These are already in railroad paint. Surprise (?), these are all S scale. Last year I saw the Lionel tank truck in a hobby shop and thought it looked quite close in size to the Ertl trucks. On the other side of the shop I found an identical truck in non-Lionel packaging and it was labeled 1/64th scale.

I wonder if other Lionel items made for 0-27 use are closer to S than to O scale. Is anyone familiar enough with the Lionel highway crane and the tracked power shovel to know what their true scale is? Even if they are larger than 1/64th, they may be usable in S scale as large equipment since these came in a variety of prototype sizes....Ted Larson

I thought I would write to tell that the small anhydrous ammonia tanks on wheels, mentioned in "Small Industry" in the December 1991 issue of The Dispatch, were made in 1/64th scale by Mini Toys in 1985. I have one that is why I know. You might be able to find these tank trailers at farm toy shows. Mine has rubber wheels, a green plastic chassis, a white plastic tank with an anhydrous ammonia decal on both sides. I hope this helps out....Andrew Miller.

The December 1991 issue of The Dispatch had an article by Will Britton about a small anhydrous ammonia operation. A small mobile ammonia tank for field use such as he desired is available from Ertl. It is called "ammonia tank", and is available in 1/64th scale. The model number is 1550-7HAO. I got several from K-Mart for \$1.97 each, and I also note that they are available from Train-99, a retail and mail-order shop. I hope this is helpful....Dr. Kirk Lindvig.

I found several modern trucks in Target Greatland that appear to be suitable for use in S gauge. These are made by the French firm, Majorette and are called "Super Movers". I observed two different kinds of cabs, one is a standard cab which appears to be a White prototype and the other is cab-over-engine with sleeper style tractor. They come with various loads, some on trailers, others have vans....Jim Sleeth

Editor's note: I bought a couple of these, too. They are actually 1/60th scale and can be used in foreground scenes or in other scenes where they are not close to a true 1/64th scale truck or automobile where their over-size becomes evident. Denis Fortier uses other Majorette vehicles which he has modified some what. Clearly, this French firm represents a useful source for S scale vehicles.

THE NASG COPY SERVICE

Copies of articles that have appeared in past NASG DISPATCH issues can be obtained from Kent Singer if you supply him with the following: 1) Name or description of the article, 2) Volume and issue number, 3) large stamped (53 cents), self-addressed envelope, and 4) your NASG membership number (found on the mailing label of each DISPATCH. There is no charge for the service. Kent's address is 105 Highland Dr., Baldwinsville, NY 13027.

POST ITS

FOR SALE FOR SALE

AF 40' flat car, CNW, 42597 10.00\$CDN. AF Gons (6), T&P, 631, 10\$CDN each. LVM 23, Reading Cov'd hopper kit 30.00\$CDN. LVM 19, crossing shanty, 10.00\$CDN. Southwind Pulpwood car, painted CN, 95.00\$CDN. 4 AM plug door boxcars with Kadee couplers, NASG specials for 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 25.00\$CDN each. Denis Fortier, 971 Boulevard du Cap, Cap-a-l'Aigle, Quebec, Canada, GOT 1B0. (418) 665-4284.

WANTED WANTED

Cascade Hobby Products (Jon Beveridge) streamline passenger car trucks. Need two sets, will take what I can get. Jim Kindraka, 44014 S. Umlerland Circle, Canton, MI 48187. (313) 451-0784.

NOTICE

NOTICE

Don Dewitt will continue as NASG Database Manager. He will be starting work on the new directory in February. He needs a post card from all of you who have changed address and/or telephone numbers since the last directory listing. Please send him that information right now before it slips your mind. Don's new address is 17 Jonathan Court, Warwick, NY 10990. ALSO, OUR APOLOGIES to all of you whose renewals have not been acknowledged. In the changing of the guard, we let a few drop through the cracks. If you are having problems with your subscription please contact John Metzger at Route 4, Box 326F, Troy, MO 63379. John sends his personal THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE RECENTLY SENT THEIR RENEWALS. Also, if you are interested in obtaining back issues John is the person to contact. John is the NASG Membership Secretary. Don't contact the Editor or The Database Manager about subscription matters.

WANTED WANTED

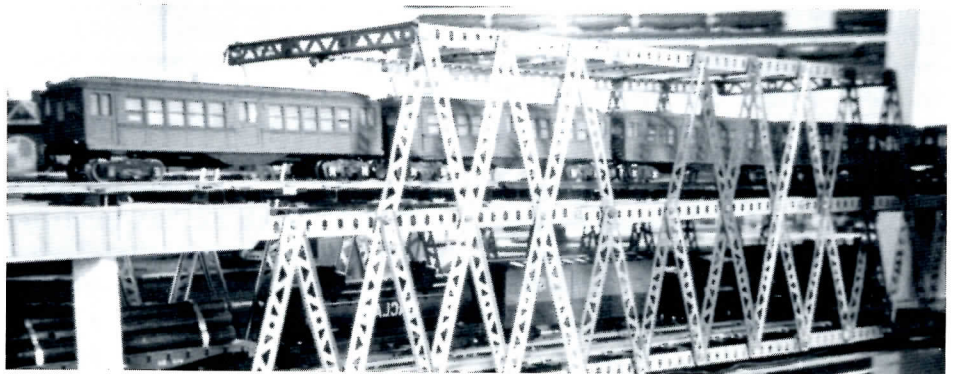
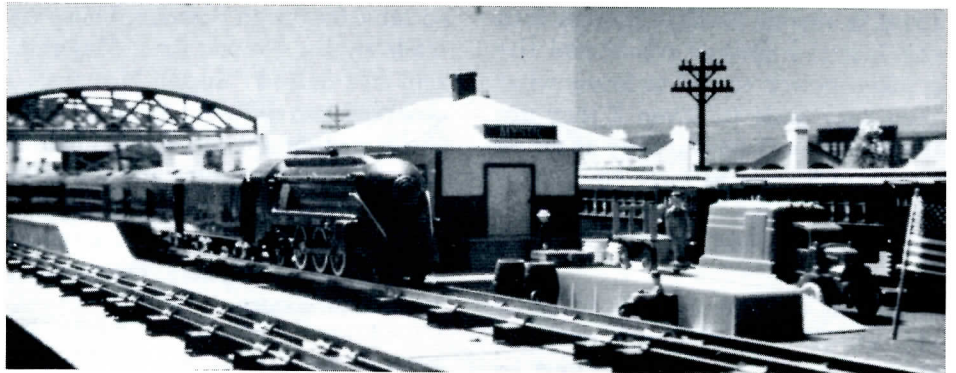
Copies of the first seven volumes of the S GAUGE HERALD. Have subsequent volumes to swap. Trumann Garrett, 27700, 41st St, Salem, WI 536168.

BRANCH LINE NEWS

Mike Palmiter

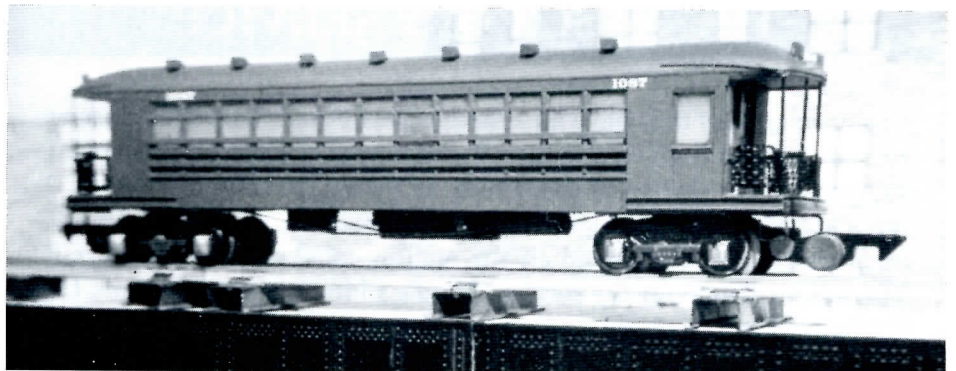
*As noted in the last issue of **The Dispatch**, I will be shepherding Branch Line News in the future. We will no doubt experiment with it for a while to see what works and what seems to serve a purpose. I want to second Bob Jackson's appeal to put my name on the mailing lists of club newsletters so that I can readily keep abreast of what's happening in your neck of the woods. I would also like to see what each of you is doing individually. I think we all would like to see that, so how about sending a photo or a description of your latest project? It doesn't have to have the scope of an article. Everything in print doesn't have to be finished, or even a "picture-perfect" model. It might even be just a progress report telling how you solved various problems. I for one am usually more motivated by a half-finished but innovative modeling idea than I am with the flawless work seen in the mainline model railroad press. Speaking of progress reports, keep an eye out for my upcoming article in **MODEL RAILROADER** about making highrise buildings in all scales which will include some of views of how I've applied this technique to my S layout....Mike*

ED DAVIS SR: Ed is a most unusual S gauger. His model work reflects his early years as a New York City rapid transit motorman. Ed eventually grew weary of the rat race and moved to Montana, securing a job with Montana Rail Link as a locomotive engineer. His attachment to the New York City rail scene and his love of American Flyer, however, is still very much with him. Ed has built layouts at each of his residences. These have usually been two layouts in one featuring his American Flyer on one level and a rapid transit operation on another. He has scratch built a number of EL trains. These are accurately proportioned rapid transit cars mounted on American Flyer trucks. Many of his bridges and elevated line components are made from A.C. Gilbert Erector Sets—making for a very unusual S gauge layout....Mike.



"S" FEST '91 — Hosted by BADGERLAND 'S'GAUGERS

It was a cool clear morning when I emerged from the house in darkness. We were leaving early Friday morning for our trip to Milwaukee and "The S Fest." The contingent from St. Louis was scheduled to rendezvous at Dave Svehla's house in Edwardsville, IL. If you weren't there by 7 AM you were left behind.



We had two groups with different route plans. The first group was due to leave at 6:30 AM in order to visit hobby stores in Chicago and Milwaukee before checking into the hotel. The second group was to leave at 7 AM with stops at Hill Hobby and Jim Lord's in the Chicago area. Jim has the finest and most complete Winross Truck collection in the U.S.

We had spent our daylight hours driving and visiting Chicago so it was time to hurry to Milwaukee. We arrived early evening at the Ramada Inn so we had time to register, quickly greet old friends and tour the trading area.

John Heck was unpacking an unusually large collection of Flyer merchandise. Numerous dealers and manufacturers were scattered around the 140 odd swap tables. River Raisin, Omnicon and S Helper were present. River Raisin had a new Poage water column, S Helper was showing off heavy-weight passenger cars and a new Amtrak prototype engine. Omnicon presented their new Pennsy 2-10-0 decapod.

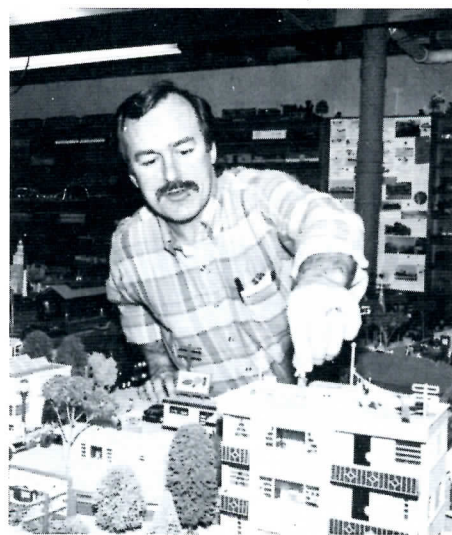
The modular layout was bigger and better than ever taking up one side of the room. The new large facilities this year made viewing and visiting that much more enjoyable.

Saturday brought snow and a cold wind but inside the banquet went very well with over 130 members and guests in attendance. Marty Glass presented a slide show of the construction and story of the layout for May Company's Famous Barr window. A short auction followed with a secret item generating the most interest. The winner exposed the mystery item as a caboose that was smashed and re-glued from last year's banquet.



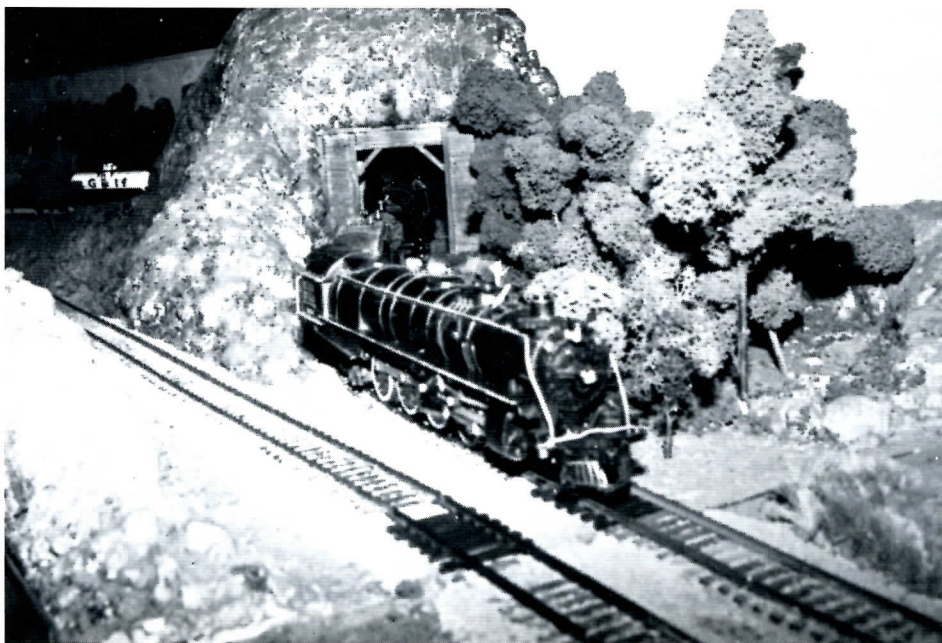
President Pete Brown smiles for the camera.

Photo Pete Mihelich



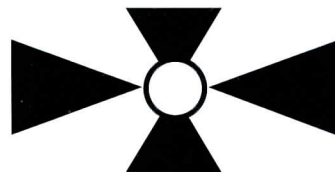
Ron Schlicht installs another "People".

Photo Pete Mihelich



AF 4-8-4 Double-heads a freight on the Modular Layout.

Photo Pete Mihelich



Earl Beagle's Cast Figures.

Photo Pete Mihelich

One final stop on Sunday morning was Ron Schlicht's basement layout. Ron is a people person, that is, he likes to people a layout. His current population is 632 as shown on the sign at the outskirts of town. Ron has been known to spend the better part of 2 days on 1 person to get arms, legs, and clothing, or lack thereof, just right.

The S Fest has become more than just another train meet, it's become a priority to American Flyer fans. Over the years the number of items, parts, displays, and sets has doubled or even tripled from the early years. The size of the crowd has increased in proportion to the available merchandise thus giving us more reasons to attend next year.

Thanks to Chairman John Wickland and Badgerland S Gaugers, the S Fest was a resounding success....Pete Mihelich



Ken Hein Prepares the Mystery Item for next year's auction.

Photo Pete Mihelich

SOUTHERN ONTARIO S GAUGERS: Denis Fortier is going to hand off editing the newsletter, to be called The Canadian S Gaugian (?), to Brian Broadway of Newmarket, Ontario. Paul Raham will serve as "Publisher". Denis notes in the current newsletter that there is a railway museum in Charny, just across the Quebec City bridge, called Univers Du Rail. Among many treasures is a completely restored CN wooden caboose, number 78602, in its original orange colors with a white herald just as it was in the 1920s. Denis notes that the NMRA Spring 1992 Convention will be held in Montreal on May 8,9,10 1992, at the Holiday Inn, 5000 Sherbrooke St....RWJ (I visited Quebec City last year, unfortunately I did not know about Univers Du Rail, so I missed it. For all of us Yanks that may never have visited Quebec City, let me say that it is probably the most gracious city on the North American continent. If you have an opportunity to visit Quebec City, don't miss it!...Ed.)

SPRING "S" SPREE: The Central Ohio S Gaugers invite you to the 5TH ANNUAL show. This year only it is to be held in Columbus because the NASG National Convention will be held in Cleveland later in the year. The "SPREE" is scheduled for May 1, 2, and 3, 1992. Registration begins on Friday, the 1st, at noon.

They have lots planned. Contact Alan Evans, P.O. Box 30345, Gahanna, OH 43230 or (614) 471-7701.

CENTRAL OHIO S GAUGERS: They are into something a bit different and interesting for their January 11th meeting (they will have been into it by the time you read this). They are going to help design host John Gaffney's S gauge layout for his basement. John's layout will be 17'6" by 24'4", a very nice size. It was requested that members sketch out plans before arrival at their meeting. They were given the amount and kind of trackage available plus the information that the track would be setting on plywood. The members were also requested to indicate what sort of buildings and scenery they envisioned. Art Lofton has agreed to draw the resulting plan with his CAD programmed computer. Let's hope they share the results of the evening with the rest of us....RWJ.

CUYAHOGA VALLEY S GAUGE ASSOCIATION: Remember that the CVSGA is the host club for the 21st Annual NASG National Convention to be held on July 16-19, 1992 at the Holiday Inn in Middleburg Heights, OH 44130. They have quite a program under development. Contact Josh Seltzer, 3567 Antisdale Ave., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118.



Chairman John Wickland addresses the Conventioners. Thanks to John for all his good work.

Photo Pete Mihelich

TRADE

NEWS & VIEWS

By DON THOMPSON

AMERICAN MODELS (10088 Colonial Industrial Dr., S. Lyons, MI 48178) has completed the drawings for the PA-1 and PB-1. The tooling has been started and hopefully they will be seeing a test shot before too long. Drawings are now being prepared for the Pennsy GG-1.

AMITY STAR MODELS (2059 Union Church Rd., NW, Thomson, GA 30824) has shipped the USRA single sheathed boxcar to their dealers. The price of this kit is \$28.95. If you buy direct add \$3.50 per car for S/H. They have also re-released the 57' PFE mechanical reefer. This kit features the new decals that are appropriate for the 40' 50' or 57' car. The price for this kit is now \$32.95. Russ is working on 4 wooden cabooses that should be finished sometime this spring. They are: GN plywood sheathed caboose, DRG&W standard caboose, NYC 19000 series and the UP CA-1. These kits will use laser cut parts.

BILL'S TRAIN SHOP (PO Box 561, Seffner, FL 33584. (813) 681-7326) is a distributor for the new HARTOY trucks. At this time there are ten different paint jobs on the Mack BM series of straight chassis trucks. These include vans, stake bodies, canvas back and drop side models. Some of the names includes Hersheys, Reeses, Swifts and Mayflower. There also 11 different paint jobs on the Mack CJ series of straight chassis trucks. The Mack CJ is a cab-over design. Some of the names include Wrigley's, Pennzoil and Coca-Cola. There are also 4 each of tractor-trailers rigs with either the BM or the CJ cab. These have 20' round nose trailers, just right for early piggy-back operations. In addition, there are 4, more modern, Peterbilt 260 trucks. These include a 2 box

vans, a panel stake body and a tanker. Prices are \$7.95 for straight chassis trucks and 11.95 for tractor-trailer trucks. If you purchase 4 or more you save "a buck a truck". "Fleet" discounts are also available. I have purchased a set of these and they are outstanding. Write or call for details. Bill's Train Shop is also a source for the PFE decals used by Amity Star for the mechanical reefers. \$5 per set, quantities limited.

CENTRAL HOBBY SUPPLY (716 West Manlius St., East Syracuse, NY 13057) has announced two new kits. The first is a NYC USRA gondola rebuild with steel sides. The second is an Erie 4-bay covered hopper. This car is modeled after the 500 that were built at the Dunmore shops in 1951, one of these cars is still being used by Conrail (one of the four versions being offered). Two E-L versions are being offered with the Erie and Conrail. These are expected in March and the price is \$33.95 for those that pre-order. After that the price will be \$37.

CENTRAL JERSEY S SCALERS (2 Roosevelt Ave., Cranford, NJ 07016) has received the "Suzy Q" 40' boxcars. They still have a few left. The price is \$25 and this includes shipping and handling. The cars were made for the club by American Models and this premium paint scheme features a six color "Suzy Q".

DMK SCALE MODELS (700 S 4th St., Rogers, AR 72756) announces 2 new decal sets for covered hoppers. The KCS "Golden West Service" for a dark blue car has yellow lettering. This set will also letter a CRLE car. The other set is a Missouri Pacific gray car with black lettering. This

set will allow the modeler a choice of logos to work with: MP with MP buzzsaw, MP with turbo eagle, TP with MP buzzsaw or CEI with CEI buzzsaw. The price for these decals is \$3.50 per set.

OMNICON (50 Lively Blvd., Elk Grove Village, IL 60007) has received the pilot model of the NYC Mohawk. They expect these engines later this spring. It may not be too late to get one.

RIVER RAISIN MODELS (6160 Upper Straits Blvd., West Bloomfield, MI 48033) is offering the 50' Milwaukee Road double-door boxcar painted and lettered in 3 different schemes that are correct from the 1940's to the 1980's. Reservations for the Burro crane are still being accepted (\$75 deposit). The price is \$299 for the unpainted and \$325 for the painted. Several colors are being offered. If enough reservations are received by March 1st, delivery is expected in June. Upgrade drives for the Overland F-3 and F-7 are still available. The price is \$99.95 and includes instructions. We are sad to report that the GE Dash 8-40C's will not be produced at this time due to price and quantity problems with the builder. Two new parts have been added to their line, a replacement elliptical spring for the USRA Andrews tender truck (\$4/pair) and a drawbar set for coupling diesels (\$3/set).

PACIFIC RAIL SHOPS (2260 Sherman Ave., North Bend, OR 97459) has been delivering the new 50' double-door boxcars in new orange and white boxes. So far the NYC (jade green), Erie, Soo and GN (bright red with billboard herald) have been delivered and should be at your dealers now, the price for these cars is \$25. Other roadnames

that are scheduled to be produced are: NH (orange), BN (green), ATSF (caboose red car with large cross and black roof), WP (with little feather) and UP. BN car will come with roller bearing trucks and NWSL wheels (these are also included in covered hopper kits. They now have 11 roadnames for the covered hopper, the latest are the PRR and CNW (green car). The price of these cars with trucks is \$32.

S DESIGNS (17 Jonathan Ct., Warwick, NY 10990) has moved and is now back in operations. They have a new phone number 1-914-986-1764. Don has started production on the B-5 series with both CB&Q Chinese red boxcars (the single and double door 50') being made. These are still available for \$22 and \$25 each. The LV (box car red) and EL (gray) 50' cars still need a few more reservations. Don asks that you write or call for more details. Don expects the EL covered hopper decals as well as a set of lube plates and "Keep Off the Roof" decals later this winter. The latter is a 70's era set and enough for 20 cars.

S HELPER SERVICE (2 Roberts Rd., New Brunswick N.J. 08901) reports that all the passenger car bodies and roofs have been made. They are now being painted and lettered with the easiest schemes being produced first and those with the most complicated paint masks being done last. Enough extra cars are made so that all cars are still available. The GP-35 project is moving along with test shots of several of the parts having been received. Delivery of these is expected after the passenger cars. At the S Fest, they unveiled an Amtrak F40. This model has a urethane shell with an American Models drive. Details are still being worked out, but this engine will sell for about \$200.

SOUTHWIND MODELS (P.O. Box 9293, Plant City, FL 33566) has announced the Santa Fe "El Capitan" passenger train as built

by Budd. The 9 car set will include an RPO, baggage, baggage-dormitory-32 chair car, two 52 seat chair car, two light weight 70' chair cars, lunch counter diner, and 50 seat chair-observation. This is available as a set only, extra cars may be available to those who buy sets. Contact Jettie if you are interested. He needs only 20 commitments for this to be a go. The price will be \$3000 set. Jettie has a tape of the O scale versions of this car and how they were made. He will lend this to those who are interested in purchasing these cars.

S SCALE AMERICA (PO Box 671, Kenmore, WA 98028-0671) now has 9 kits available for immediate shipping. SSA has also begun shipping to dealers. Dealer inquiries are invited. The kits are #100, a package of 28 old style cast handrail stanchions for GP7s and early GP9s (\$8.95); #101, a package of 28 stamped handrail stanchions for later EMD units w/o blower ducts (\$8.95); #115, a package of 22 stanchions for early Alco RSs (\$6.95); #116, a package of 4 H-brackets for early Alco RSs (2.95); #100A, prototype handrail kit for GP7 and early GP9, kit includes properly shaped handrails, (\$16.95); #101A, prototype handrail kit for late GP9 and GP18, kit includes properly shaped hand rails, (\$16.95); #200A, GP7 B-unit conversion kit including handrails and stanchions (\$18.95); #200B, GP9 B-unit conversion kit including handrails and stanchions (\$18.95); #125, GP9-GP18 factory style low nose (20.95); #130, 70 ton roller bearing freight car trucks 33" scale wheels (\$8.95); #131, 70 ton roller bearing freight trucks with 33" hi-rail wheels (\$8.95). We must apologize for incorrectly quoting the price of the roller bearing trucks in our last column.

LEHIGH VALLEY MODELS (1225 N. Arch St., Allentown, PA 18104) now has available its new Bulk Oil Depot, LVM28. \$35.00, 10% UPS added. Since the 1920s, oil has gradually displaced coal and the railroads have played an important part in this changeover. Home

heating oil, various gasolines, drums of oil and grease, were distributed to local dealers. The LVM model is perfect for use on steam or diesel era layouts and its prototype is equally at home in a large city or a small country town. The bulk oil depot is condensed to conserve layout space, but is so designed to allow the model builder to add more or larger tanks to suit his needs or space. Extra piping can also be found in your own clothes closet in the form of heavy duty clothes hangers. This model is assembled upon a 6" x 26" piece of 1/8" thick hardboard (Masonite) to make it easier to move to its location on the layout. The hardboard is not furnished with the kit. All other parts are precut to size whenever possible. Windows and door castings make assembly very easy. The emblems and various signs are furnished in bright colors. The instructions contain many drawings to simplify construction and there is even a large section explaining how to enclose your depot with realistic looking chain link fence. A companion piece is the LVM8T 1934 cab-over-engine Mack tank truck.

NASG Disptach Back Issues

Back issues are available from the Membership Secretary, John Metzger. For a limited time, issues from the last two years are available at \$3.50 each including postage. Please send John a SASE to find out which issues are still available at Rt. 4, Box 326 F, Troy, MO 63379.

DEAR #\$\$%&*!

Editor:

I am trying to spearhead support for a conversion project to turn the new GP35 offered by S Helper and American Models into a GP30. I have discussed this with Mr. Jackman of S Scale America and he seemed receptive.

What needs to be done now is for those in the S scale community that would like to have a GP30 to indicate support for this project by writing to Mr. Jackman and assuring him that it would be a success (meaning we would buy it.)

"S"incerely,
Bruce Bogart

Editor:

I appreciated seeing the request from the Oregon S Scalers in The Dispatch for input on their upcoming convention. My comments based on the 4 conventions that I have attended are as follows:

The Pittsburgh convention was by far the most enjoyable due to the joint NMRA activities. There I put a high emphasis on running the layout and so missed much of the convention activity, but I got to just as many good clinics as there typically are at our independent conventions, and I had just as much S scale camaraderie, if not more, due to running the layout. Seeing layouts at the convention site and seeing many more dealer/mfr displays was a big plus to the joint meeting. I could not attend the General Meeting at Syracuse but I understand that there was a strong senti-

ment for S only convention. Quite frankly, I don't see that it's necessary to have a separate convention to get the "fellowship" that people want. Seems to me that it is very easy to provide this within a larger convention simply by having several S only activities and a private lounge. A lounge with seating and a VCR for showing tapes would provide a place to get away from the crowd, a location for late night bull sessions and a location for S only activities such as the auction and our annual meeting. I also found the Sunday morning brunch to be more enjoyable than the Saturday evening banquets that I have been to.

My vote therefore would be to have the conventions concurrent. This would also benefit those with limited vacation time. Having two consecutive conventions is the worst case for any one wishing to attend both but having limited time and money. Most of us would be forced to make a choice between one or the other. Two overlapping conventions would be an improvement but could result in missing significant events in both, again for reasons of time and money.

I don't mean to disparage all the good work done by the Syracuse group but I encountered a few problems which foreknowledge of my help prevent. A few thoughts: Make sure that the RETURN time for tours is included in the schedules, and if the tour has to be cut short to make the return time make sure that there is a host present to make that happen (unless the guests unanimously want the tour to be extended.) A note of explanation about the tour destination

would also help when deciding what to do. If the convention is to be held in multiple rooms, provide a map or good route signs. I missed an entire display room at Syracuse. The sign marking it was not obvious from a distance and I never got close enough to it to know what it was.

Regarding travel to your convention, my expectation would be to travel by train. On a recent business trip to Oregon, I returned home by Amtrak and was thoroughly convinced that taking a family to visit our Pacific Northwest relatives would be great fun via train. Make sure that people know that Amtrak has family plans and air-rail packages for those that don't want to take the time to travel by rail both directions. Also point out that for a scenic trip take the Chicago-Portland route through Denver rather than the Montana route. The mountain portion of the trip occurs during the daylight hours when the route takes you through Denver.

Thanks for all the effort you will be putting into these preparations.

Regards,
Ted Larson

Editor:

It was reported in the minutes of the NASG BOT meeting in Syracuse, NY in the December issue of The Dispatch that a large expense for the NASG was the Membership Directory.

To help reduce this expense, offer this possible solution: Send the full membership directory to only new members, send only update sheets to present members. Since the membership is on a computer, thanks to the fine work of Don DeWitt, this should be possible.

To make this work, the following things must take place before the

next directory mailing:

- Obtain three-ring binders. A 1" thick binder would be enough.
- Change the format of the directory so that either Alpha or State breaks start a new page.
- For the present membership, print and deliver the directory along with the binders.
- Directory update time, to new members, send the binder and the listing; to present members, send only the updated sheets. They could even be sent with The Dispatch.

Since the size of the page would be 8 1/2 by 11, the number of pages should be reduced, even with added page breaks. The pages would still be 2-sided. The pages would not have to be bound as is done now. The removal of the binding cost might even offset the cost of the change-over.

It might be a good idea to offer this to the membership and get their feelings on this matter.

Michael Scivoletti

Editor's Note: If you think that Mike Scivoletti's idea has merit, write to Mike Ferraro and let him know. Or, if you don't think much of it, you probably should still let Ferraro know how you feel.

Editor:

I initiated correspondence with Lionel Corp. because I had heard that they were restricting their volume of production for 1991/1992. I also questioned the ratios of price, quality and performance for the Northern Pacific set which would have up to 6 cars and 4 engines. I must say they responded by letter and by phone. I talked frankly with their marketing manager. I expressed that we all want them to succeed, but that I felt that the prices were aimed at the collector and that they would not be able to get them down if production is not increased.

I felt that there is a concern at Lionel and that they are trying. Since talking to them I have made the following observations. Lionel eliminated American Flyer and did not have any competition from Marx and Kusan for a long time. How can they sell American Flyer when they have lost market share to Williams, K-Line, Right-of-Way and Weaver in O gauge? Why did this happen? Did you see the new K-Line passenger cars? Well, every one is producing quality and at a fair price.

This is what is happening in S gauge. It costs too much to bring a

\$35 American Flyer box car up to the quality of a Pacific Rail Shops or American Models box car. The American Flyer line is all reproductions. We can buy the original American Flyer, but we cannot buy new styles of equipment from American Flyer (Lionel).

Let's address sales volume. I own a mint AA Northern Pacific PA. I have given up trying to find a B unit and passenger cars of the same quality at a good price. Lionel decides to produce the whole set, yet will not sell me a B unit or any passenger cars. Is this not restriction of sales volume? I have decided to order all 5 Northern Pacific passenger cars from American Models for \$234. I don't have to hurry up and prepay or make a deposit of 10% now. In fact, I can even buy them next year if the recession ends. Might even add FP-7s instead of having to buy 2 more PAs just to get passenger cars. Owning the name American Flyer has value only when you can make sales. Most S gauge equipment, including American Flyer, is made in the USA so this explains pricing problems, but what about quality and better gearing for engines? This is 1992, not 1945!

Yours,
James Sleeth

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S-3 & S-4 CHECK GAGE - \$2.95									
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AMERICAN FLYER SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORT

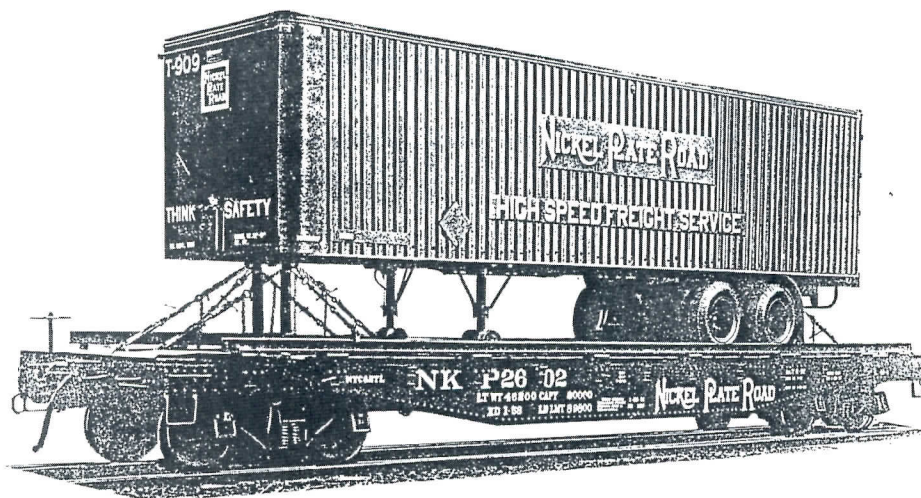
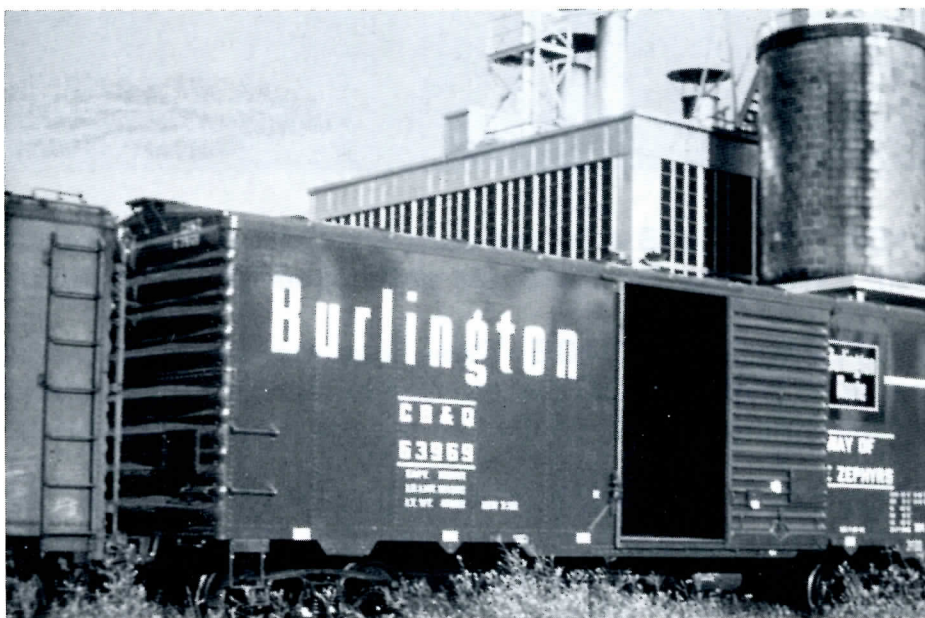
Doug Peck, Chairman

First, an update on the 1991 AF Commemorative cars. Both cars were delivered by Lionel in late-August, and shipped out to members during September, so everyone who ordered them should have received them long ago! The good news is that there are still a few 1991 cars available! NASG members may now order a maximum of one additional Boraxo hopper and/or one additional NYC reefer, while they last. Prices remain the same: \$33 for the Boraxo hopper; \$37 for the NYC reefer; or \$65 for one of each. Don't delay....get them while they last!

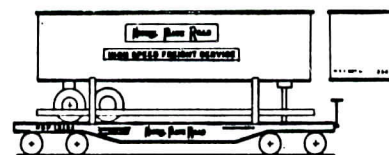
Second, Advertising for the 1992 Commemorative cars is delayed, but will be included in the next issue of the Dispatch. The 1992 cars will be a CB&Q boxcar, in Chinese red, and a Nickel Plate Road flatcar with a 1/64-scale ERTL trailer decorated with NKP markings. This will be the first time an AF flatcar will be available with an actual S-scale trailer-van, and Lionel will be specially equipping the flatcar to accommodate and secure the trailer. This piece will be supplied with a tractor-cab also, although it will not mount on the flatcar. An extra supply of NKP trailer-vans and cabs will be available for separate purchase as well. Look for order forms in the next issue!

Third, the selection process for the 1993 cars is already underway, and we will undoubtedly be ready to announce them at the Cleveland convention this July. Thanks go to committee members Lee Durrence and Paul McDonald for heading-up the 1993 selection process; it's been a great assistance to me.

Finally, two requests: (1) the Service Committee can use additional members; if you're interested please contact me; (2) one of the committee's respons-



ibilities is to supply the Dispatch with AF-related articles for publication. We need help doing this! Very little comes in to me, which is why you're not seeing something in every issue. We can use your ideas with rough or polished articles, short or long. Please help out.



Piggy Back Van, 1954 style

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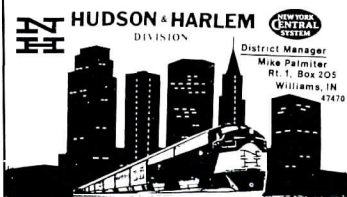
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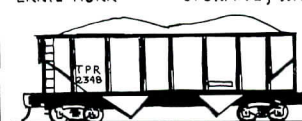
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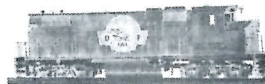


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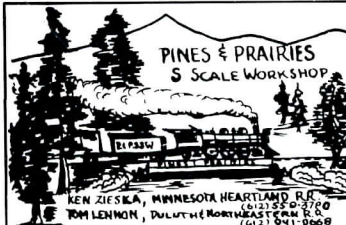
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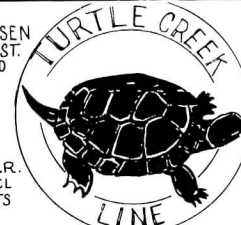
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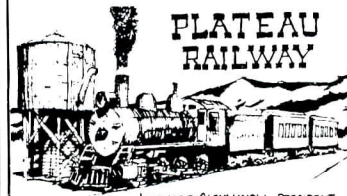
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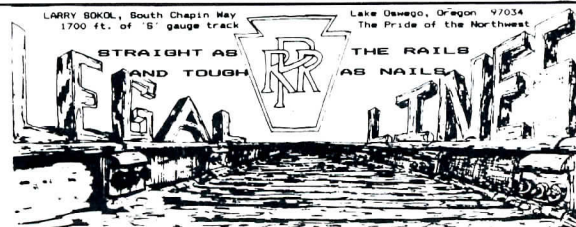
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