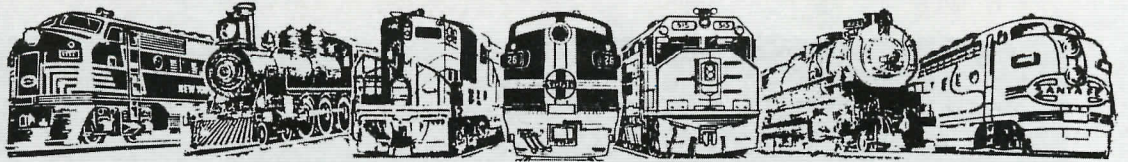


February 1997

Volume XX Number 1

DISPATCH



Designing A Helix
Small Depot
Module Legs
Freight Car Reveiw



This 40' Box Car Will "Steel" The Scene On Your American Flyer® Layout

Add some variety to your pike with our colorful boxcars



Photo by Bob Werre

Introducing our steel re-built boxcars, new for 1997

- ◆ Fully assembled, ready-to-run
- ◆ Improved opening & closing doors
- ◆ Running boards feature wood grain detail
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American Flyer® Box Cars appear courtesy of Rick Zeigler

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The right trains. The right size. The right price.

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NASG DISPATCH

Official Publication of the
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
of S GAUGERS

The NASG **DISPATCH** welcomes art, photographs, letters, articles and other S-gauge-related materials contributed by the membership. Send all such materials to the editor:

Jeff Madden
438 Bron Derw Ct.
Wales, WI 53183
414-968-3729
TLMadden@EXEC.PC.COM

NASG membership runs from July through June, including all **DISPATCH** issues for the membership year, irrespective of enrollment date. All applications, renewals and membership questions should be directed to:

The Membership Secretary
NASG, Inc.
c/o Dody Stevens
9619 NW 71st St.
Kansas City, MO 64152-2403
816-741-1505

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COVER:

A converted American Flyer 0-8-0 becomes a consolidation on Brooks Stover's Hi-rail Buffalo Creek and Gauley B.

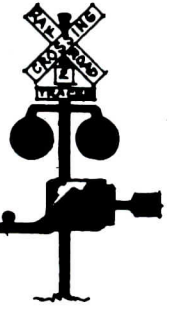
Inset — One of NASG's 1997 scale/hi-rail exclusive cars is this S-Helper flat and load.

Photos by Brooks Stover & Bob Werre.

ORDER BOARD

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THE DEADLINES for articles are the 1st of February, April, June, August, October and December for issues dated April, June, August, October, December, February, respectively.

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President's Message ...

The Presence of S

Friends,
How do we in S tell other model train enthusiasts about our gauge?

I believe the best method is to have operating layouts in as many public and private shows and window/store displays as possible. And yes, this involves a lot of effort, particularly for S clubs which have the layouts to display. Let me cite a recent example that **"hit the nail right on the head."**

The S club I belong to (the Central Ohio S Gaugers) has had a portable 16 x 20 foot layout for 10 years. We operated it for the first time (with minimal scenery) at a Great American Train Show and were paid for doing it. Our next show was sponsored by a private individual in Springfield, Ohio. Held each April and December in three large fairground buildings, this is one of the better shows in our area. Since that first Springfield show, we've been to each one since (we request a small payment for wear and tear on the layout, and the promoter has been more than happy to oblige). At the December (1996) show the promoter asked if we were going to be back in April. I indicated that our layout trailer was literally coming apart at the seams, and we'd be out of commission for awhile. His reply: "If you can't come, I have an HO club that would be happy to take your space."

Those were almost fighting words, and our club members quickly replied that **WE WOULD BE THERE** in April! The attendance is good at this show. There are usually HO, N and G scale layouts, and S needs to be represented. Besides, we've gotten quite a few people to join our club as well as being able to show train enthusiasts that S gauge is alive and well. We can operate scale, hi-rail and American Flyer equipment on the five operating loops of code 148. Also, we have excellent membership participation at this show, and that's helpful in the set-up, operation and dismantling of the layout. Our club doesn't receive a lot of "reward" for this show, but we enjoy **BEING THERE!** We also display a 2' x 8' vinyl banner above the layout proclaiming loudly who we are.

Another train show we do for gratis is one to help raise money

for the preservation of a train station. Again, we are there keeping company with HO, LGB and N gauge layouts.

The idea of S being a presence at train shows **IS** important. Recently I've heard of one club who, upon losing the location of their modular club layout, chose to store it and work on home layouts only. Don't get the idea that I'm against home layouts (more of them are indeed needed), but to spread the word to the general public, we need to get beyond our borders — **"to preach to the congregation, not just to the choir."**

Another club voted to increase the amount they request to display their layout at public and private train shows. After the show promoter looks at this increase, I'm sure that another train club with minimal financial requirements will be invited instead. Thus, no presence of S. **NOT** a good idea!

Then there are always store window displays. The St. Louis S Gaugers are fortunate to be able to set up an operating layout in the storefront of the Famous Barr Department Store in downtown St. Louis. It's on display from Thanksgiving until after Christmas. An excellent promotion for S — again, **A PRESENCE OF S.**

Our club built a 12' x 22' layout in a hobby shop upstairs in Columbus, Ohio, eight years ago, and from Thanksgiving to New Years provided operators to run the display. (Unfortunately there have been some other non-train related problems with this layout, so we've not been operating there on a regular basis).

There are many other clubs with modular or portable layouts: Rochester Area S Gaugers, Bristol S Gaugers, Connecticut S Gaugers, Badgerland S Gaugers, State Line S Gaugers, Cuyahoga Valley S Gaugers, Bay Area S Scalers, Central New York S Gaugers, Miami Valley S Gaugers, Baltimore Area American Flyer Club, S Canada, Potomac Valley S Gaugers, Altoona Area Train Collectors — just to name a few that I'm aware of. (I know I've missed some other clubs with layouts, so just to set the record straight, **please contact me** if your club was left out — and send me your newsletter if you publish one).

-Alan

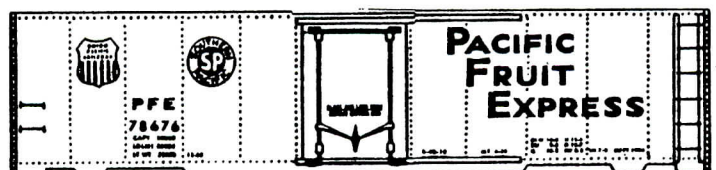
NASG NEWS

NASG to Offer 3 Freight Cars in 1997:

For the first time ever NASG members will have an opportunity to purchase 3 different ready-to-run freight cars as part of our annual program. All 3 will be available in hi-rail/Flyer compatible, but two will also be available with scale wheels and couplers. The manufacturers represented are Lionel, S Helper Service and Downs Model Railroad Co. As in the past, members will be allowed to buy two cars from each company.

At the Dearborn Convention the BOT voted to purchase an exclusive freight car from another S gauge company, in addition to the ongoing Lionel (American Flyer) car. After reviewing the proposals made by S Helper and Downs, the BOT voted to purchase 300 cars from each of these manufacturers.

The American Flyer commemorative car from Lionel for 1997 will be a limited production run of a Pacific Fruit Express reefer. The 16th annual Lionel car project will be a PFE plug-door reefer carrying both the UP and SP logos. The reefer will have orange sides and roof, with black ends. AF operating knuckle couplers will be standard. Cost will be \$55.00. The order blank will be in the April issue.



Continued on Page 23

Jeff's Junction

LETTING GO

Most fine scale S scalers, standard or narrow, have come or are coming to S from other smaller gauges. They sort of just "graj-ee-ate." And, many strictly American Flyer S gaugers move over to the hi-rail or scale side. Whether coming from another gauge or sliding over from strictly AF, often a problem is created of what to do with the older equipment or collection.

To make this leap "cold turkey" is not as easy as it sounds! Many modelers of other gauges who consider S the perfect size still hesitate to jump directly into the water. And strictly Flyer people often have a heavy emotional attachment to A.C. Gilbert era equipment..

An HOer might say, "Gee I've got all this time and money invested in any HO/HOn3 layout, but I like the size of S. HO has all these neat plastic cars and building kits. I can make a loco roster for almost any railroad - steam or diesel. And - the price, gee, quality plastic diesels for around 50 bucks, plastic freight cars are \$7-\$10, detailed and molded structures are only \$10 or \$20 and turnouts are only about \$10 each. But — S is such a nice size. I can see the details better and operation is much improved."

An O gauger: "Gosh, I've always had Lionel. I like the bulk, but I do like the idea of being able to have more of a layout in S and still have a larger size to detail. And I like the realism of 2 rail, and the price is about the same."

An N scaler: "Geez, I can do a lot with N in a small space, and there's a bunch of ready-to-run stuff at reasonable prices, but I'm going blind as a bat trying to work with small parts. I need to move up to HO- err - well - S or Sn3. Yeah, the size is right - a little more expensive, but ..."

A Flyer collector/operator moans, "Man, I really like this new stuff coming from AM and S-Helper, but I have such an investment in original American Flyer..."

SO ALL YOU SWITCHERS, how do you let go?

1. Decide on the type of S or Sn3 scale layout you want. In other words check around, talk to and visit S scalers, read all the literature you can get, check out the hobby stores or catalogs.

2. Decide on the type of layout and equipment you want in S for your principal layout.

3. LET GO! Let go of your other scale (this could even mean sliding over to scale S from American Flyer).

Let Go Option 1: Totally scrap the other gauge whether it be HO or Lionel O gauge or get rid of all the Flyer. Sell off these items to finance your way into S scale or Sn3. Realistically, if you're coming from the smaller gauges, your new S or Sn3 empire will most likely be smaller in

scope - less cars, fewer locos, fewer structures. This may be by design - "I want a less complicated layout with fewer maintenance headaches and more reliable operation." Or by default - less of a layout will fit in the same space as an N or HO layout. An S layout will probably be more rural with fewer towns and yards. Track planning will be less complicated. If you're coming from O or S tinline, you still may end up with a new layout which may take up the same or more space, but would feature more realism.

Let Go Option 2: Partially swing over to S scale (or the scale/hi-rail side of S). You just can't totally scrap your other scale (or Flyer)- too much emotional attachment. Just downsize the original scale. Maybe sell off some equipment to get started in S or Sn3. But, if this is the case, then how do you model in two gauges or in Flyer/hi-rail or scale?

Solutions for 2 gauges: You can have two layouts.

- Maybe one would be an HO Santa Fe mainline and the other an Sn3 logging line. These could be layouts in different rooms or even on two levels. The Sn3 branch could theoretically interchange with the HO layout.

- You could construct an S scale standard gauge layout around the basement walls and build a freestanding 5' x 9' Flyer layout in the middle of the area.

- You could build your main layout with the smaller gauge, but build S equipment for use on club modular layouts.

- You could keep your main layout with the smaller gauge and build S or Sn3 modules

- You could build an S and Sn3 layout in your home and operate your HO or N rolling stock on a friend's or club layout.

- If you move towards a hi-rail layout in S, you can still run your Flyer trains if you use Code 125 or 148 track.

What are some of the reasons why you might scrap your old gauge to go to S or at least partially to S?

1. The right size (the Goldilocks Syndrome).
2. Easier on aging eyes.
3. Detail shows up.
4. More reliable operation.
5. Tight knit fellowship.
6. * Budget decisions might work to the better. Instead of quantity, maybe less layout and equipment could lead to more quality and less overall cost.
7. The challenge of working in a scale where things don't fall in your lap.
8. Lots of new plastic kits and RTR locomotives and cars are increasing in availability, making startup a bit easier.
9. More realism, especially track, if you are moving away from Flyer to Hi-rail or scale S.

So if you like S (or the scale side of S), GO FOR IT, either totally or partially. Down the road I plan on doing a trackplan for this magazine which would be about modeling in two gauges. I would love to hear your story, if you're already doing this.

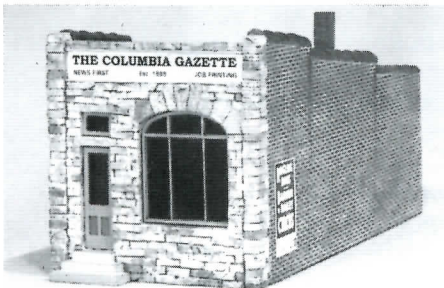
-Jeff

NEW PRODUCTS REPORT

By Jeff Madden

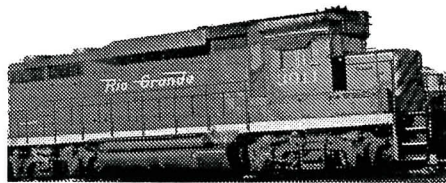
BRC FILM & VIDEO (P.O. Box 10123, Erie, PA 16514 - 800-361-8538) still has some Lionel decorated commemorative AF boxcars. There are 2 different styles of dark blue and red box cars. One is called the Crossing Gate car, and the other is decorated for the American Flyer Boys Railroad Club. \$49.95 each plus \$4 S&H. This is the same outfit that sells historical Flyer videos - *Roar of the Rails*, *Gilbert Film Spectacular (1959 advertising)* and the *Boy's Railroad Club*.

BUILDING & STRUCTURE CO. (Box 1296, Fenton, MO 63026) has a new cast hydrocal building called the Columbia Gazette. This small one-story western town structure would be suitable for a small mining town. Besides a newspaper office, it could be used as a restaurant, jail, bank and so on. The walls are cast hydrocal and details are laser cut wood. Kit 4067 is \$49.95. Send an SSAE for a flyer or \$5.00 for a 32 page illustrated catalog.



BILL'S TRAIN SHOP (P.O. box 561, Seffner, FL 33583) is announcing a spring delivery of the brass GP30s. There will be an extra parts bag included with each version. There will be 9 versions available (depending on orders, I presume). Phase I, low hood; phase I, low hood non-dynamic; phase II, low hood; phase II, low hood non-dynamic; phase II, low hood Alco trucks; phase II, low hood, Alco trucks and non-dynamic; phase II, low hood and PRR antennae; B unit (UP). Most units \$759.00; PRR antenna unit \$799.00; B unit \$769.00. The Coon's Gap Sawmill is scheduled for May or June of this year. Bill has a Web Page

on the internet now. Here it is: www.netcom.com/~wadepub/bts.



ERTL (Dyersville, Iowa and your local farm toy store). From Will Holt comes news from their collector magazine that a 1950 Chevrolet flatbed truck is being released soon. It will have a John Deere tractor load and will be available only from John Deere dealers. Price ???, probably under \$10.

LLEDO (See Dec. issue or Asheville Diecast, 1434 Brevard Rd., Asheville, NC 28806). Their Days Gone By Series has various 1996 releases and '97 coming which are 1/64 or are close. Some of the better newer ones I saw first hand at Asheville Diecast was a Chrysler Airflow (streamlined) Mobiloil tank van (1937) No. 78000, a 7up stepvan No. 71006, a 1934 Mack towtruck No. 27003 in Mobiloil livery, A Pepsi stepvan No. 71007 and many other versions of trucks, buses and cars too numerous to list. Lledo seems to do monthly releases, so it's hard to keep up. Retail prices are generally \$6.50 each.



JOHNNY O. (11016 Burbank Rd., Burbank, OH 44214). A relatively new manufacturer in the large gauges has some scenic details listed for S in a recent publication. Johnny O offers

some 1/64 spun aluminum oil drums - painted \$7.50 dz., unpainted \$3.75 dz. Also offered are some wood laser cut industrial items: pallets, 2 for \$2.25; 3 drum bottom rack, \$2.25; 3 drum rack stacking stand, \$2.25; upright drum rack, \$5.25; small crate, \$3.75.

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE S SCALE ASSN. (P.O. box 1201, Westminster, CO 80030-1201). In case you missed the insert in the December *Dispatch*, MESA, the sponsor for the NASG convention in Denver this summer, is offering a special run modernized Pacific Rail Shops 50' double door boxcar painted in D&RGW gold and silver. Scale or hi-rail versions will be \$34.95. Add \$3.50 per car for orders not being picked up at the convention. Two numbers are available - 63797 and 63765. Make checks to MESA.

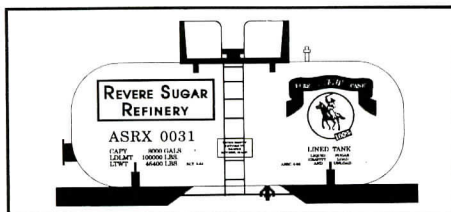
REMOTE CONTROL SYSTEMS OF ILLINOIS (1861 Ridge Dr., Freeport, IL 61032). This outfit (a division of Caboose Industries) has a cordless walkaround throttle system which can be wired into existing wiring systems. This is NOT a command control system. The throttle system is solid state and is designed for modern can and coreless motors but will work with open frame motors as well.

For use in scales from N to G, the system can be used with standard block wiring. There are no receivers to buy and install in locos. There are two components needed for each throttle - a receiver and a handpiece (push pad throttle). The throttles have built-in momentum with indefinite memory. Up to 6 different frequencies are available. A basic system including one base and one throttle are priced at the following: 2 amp \$229.95, 2 amp (no case) \$219.95, 4 amp \$269.95, 6 amp \$299.95.

I would write for more details if you are interested. The price structure for additional units is different. I have used these throttles, and they work pretty good. They are really helpful if you have a walkaround type layout where cord tangling on traditional walkaround throttles is a problem and/or aisles are

narrow. The range for these radio signal throttles is over 100 feet, and they will operate around corners and through most walls. Check these out if you already have standard wiring setup and want one or more cordless throttles. There probably was a review in one of the commercial magazines already, or if any S gaugers have experience with these, let me know.

R.S.S.V.P. Models (P.O. Box 345, Tyngsboro, MA 01879) is announcing a Revere Sugar Refinery 8,000 gallon tank car for use in transporting liquid syrup. The car will be an exclusive and limited to 300 which will be produced by Downs Models. This will be a good companion for the Revere sugar PS-2 covered hopper being offered by the Bristol club. The car will be white and numbered 0031 like the original which was produced in 1953. The one-of-a-kind car was originally silver and unlined, but after one unsuccessful trip to Canada, the car was repainted white and received a lining to keep the syrup from solidifying. Both scale and hi-rail versions available. Cost is \$39.95 plus \$5.00 S&H. Mass. residents add 5% sales tax.



S HELPER SERVICE (2 Roberts Rd., New Brunswick, NJ 08901). We missed listing a couple of the 3rd run PS-2 covered hopper road names. They are SP gray and CSX gray. These along with the ones mentioned in the October issue list for \$39.95 RTR with Hi-rail and scale wheels provided.

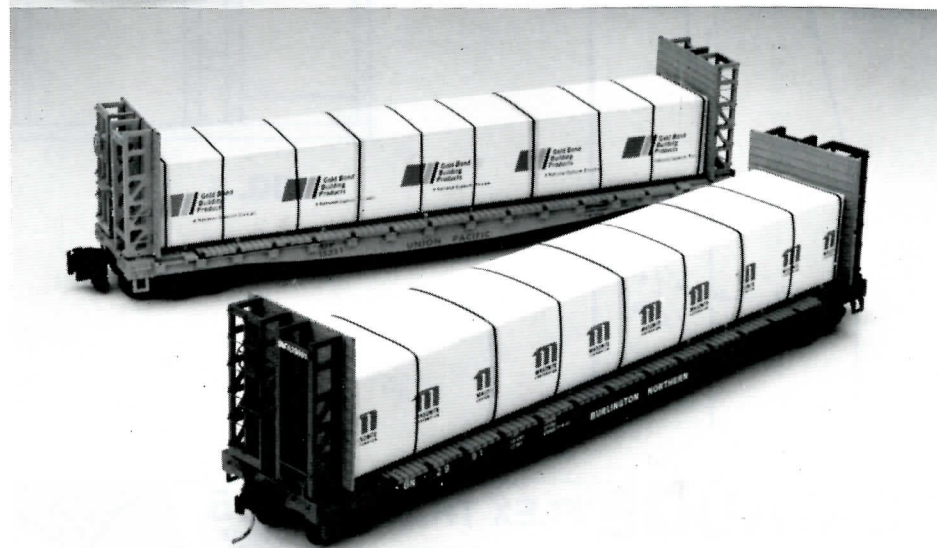
The SW9s are on track for 1997. Two numbers for each road listed will be available for these RTR switchers, except, of course, the undecorated one. Besides undec, road names are: ACL, Amtrak, B&O, B&M, BN, CP, CB&Q, Chessie (B&O), C&NW, Conrail, EL, NYC, PRR, SF and UP. There was going to be 1 # available in Chessie with WM initials, but since it was discovered that WM didn't own any SW9s, it will be changed to a B&O or C&O version. SW9s were made from 1951 to 1954 with over 750 sold to 80 plus railroads.. \$199.95 each with \$75 deposit for reservations.

Production has also been scheduled for the 53' 6" standard and bulk flatcars. These may be available as soon as April or May. Standard flats will come lettered for undec (red), undec (black), BN, CB&Q, Rio Grande, IC, Southern, UP and Wabash. These will be \$39.95 each. Bulkhead flats will have building material loads and be lettered in the following road names: undec (red), BN (U.S. Gypsum), BN (Plum Creek), Rio Grande (Evans), IC (Gold Bond), IC (Johns-Manville), Southern (Evans), UP (Masonite), UP (U.S. Gypsum) and Wabash (Gold Bond). These will retail for \$49.95 each. These cars will feature a zamac metal body with molded plastic

“wood grain” deck. Reservations - \$5.00 deposit.

The wide-vision caboose project is underway. Look for this to be a real jewel with complete interior and operating marker lights.

For those interested in single car orders for the new Pacific Rail Shops 40' steel reefers, S Helper is selling them for \$42 each. Cars come lettered for PFE (alum.), PFE (orange), Milw. Road and Rock Island. All except the aluminum car are available with more than one number. S Helper also has a new e-mail address: Robin@showcaseline.com.



Upcoming this year from S Helper are (above) SW9 and 53' 6" bulkhead flat cars and (left) wide vision caboose. The caboose will feature interior and lighted markers.

UNATTACHED MODULE LEGS

By Ted Larson

An Idea From The Houston S Gaugers

No, this isn't a story about unattached fashion "models", it's about legs for our model railroad modules. So get your minds on the right track and let's see how the Houston S Gaugers solved their module leg problems.

Their manner for installing legs on modules at set-up time is novel; they don't attach the legs permanently. Instead, they let simple gravity do the work of holding the legs tightly in place.

Of course, they don't accomplish this by simply placing the modules on standard 2x2 legs. What they do is taper the tops of the legs on two sides and build mating tapered pockets into the framework of the modules.

The simple weight of the modules wedges the leg ends into the mating slots on the module itself. The modules then can be positioned with the other modules. The legs easily dis-assemble from the framework by a simple tug and a twist - SLICK! I do believe that

adjustable floor levelers are attached to the bottoms of the legs to allow for differences in floor height.

The accompanying drawings on the next few pages show the components and assembly of this leg system. Note that the socket assemblies which receive the legs on the framework are glued and screwed for sturdiness. A drawing for the sawing jig is also shown.

-Ted

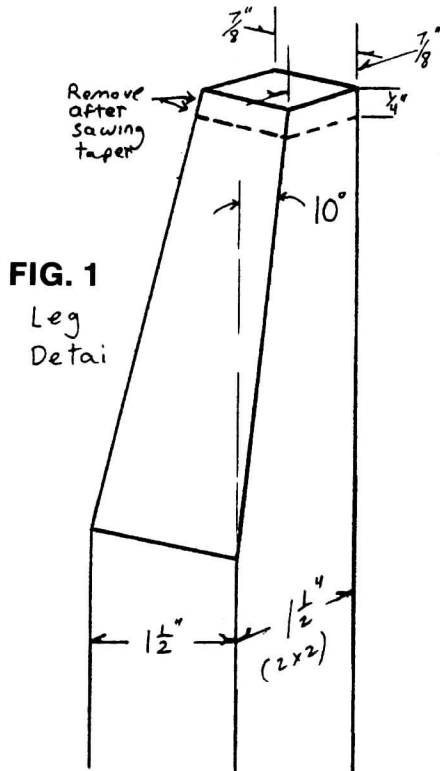


FIG. 1
Leg
Detail

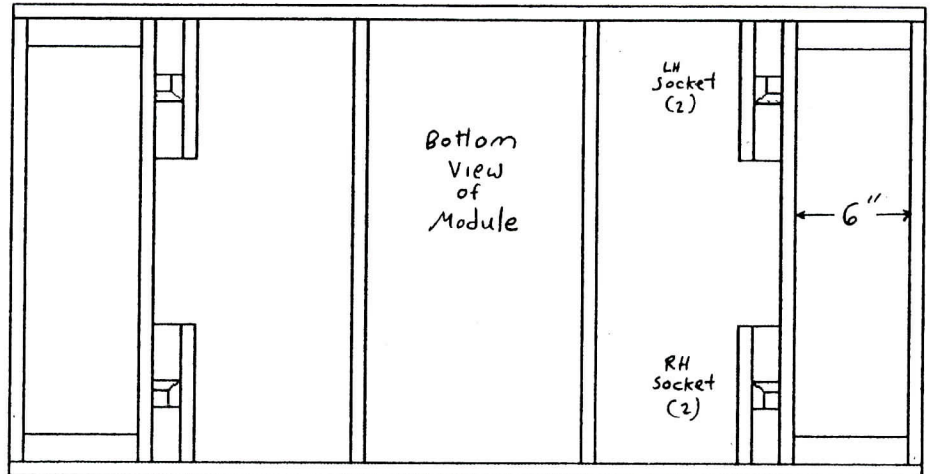


FIG. 2

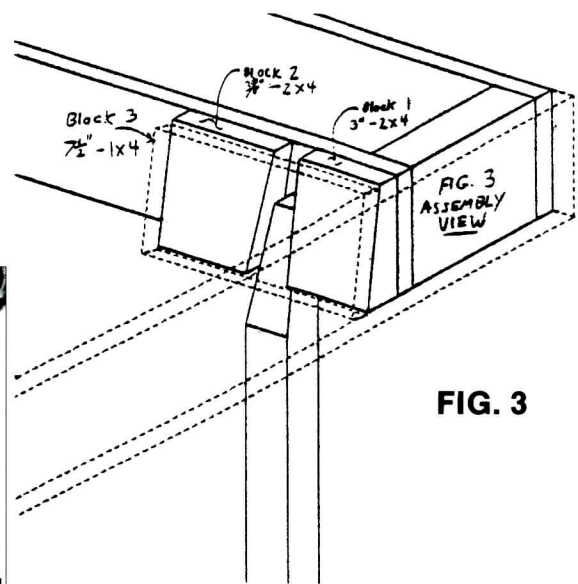


FIG. 3

S-GAUGE 'FLEX TRACK' \$9.95
RUNS ORIGINAL A/F, HIGH RAIL OR SCALE!
 Solid Nickel Silver Rail!
 INTRO-PRICE PER 40 INCH SECTION
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- No templates, bend fixtures or special tools required
- Highly conductive and durable solid nickel silver rail
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Easily bends to virtually any shape without kinking

Ties **FIRMLY** attached to rails
 The "NO PROBLEMS" track, with 100% Money Back Guarantee and Exchange Policy

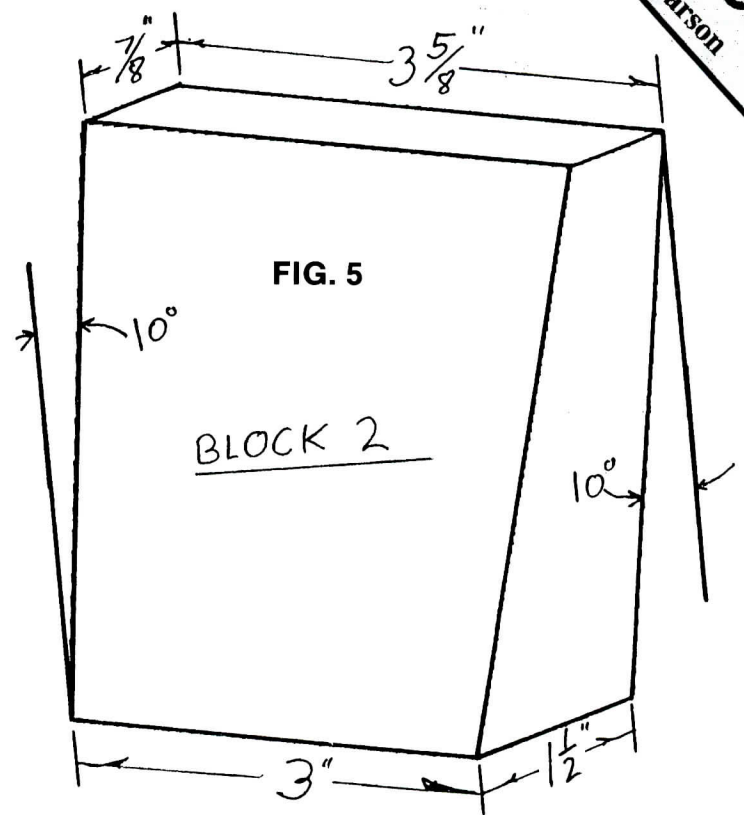
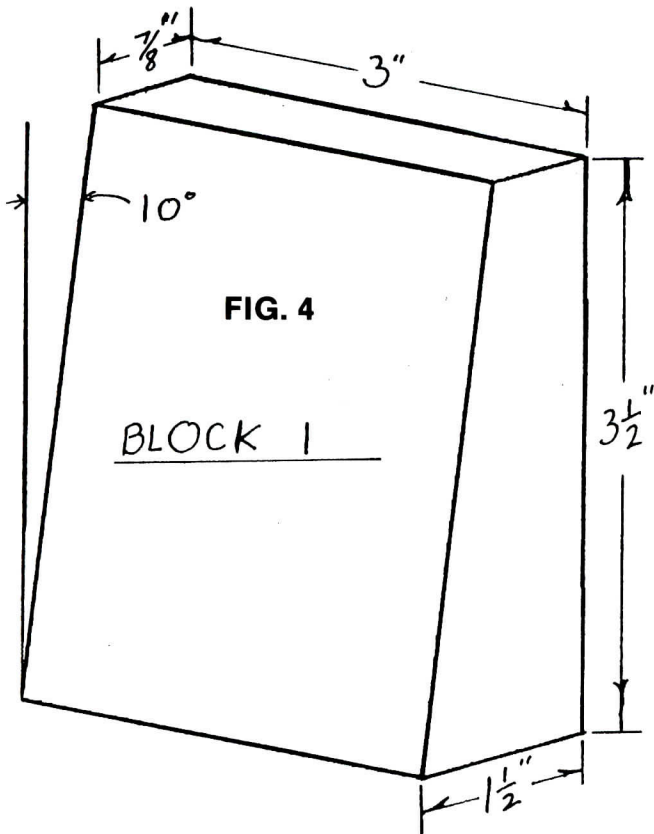
NEW double Rail Joiner System!
 NASG Standards

Call or write for free brochure and name of closest stocking dealer

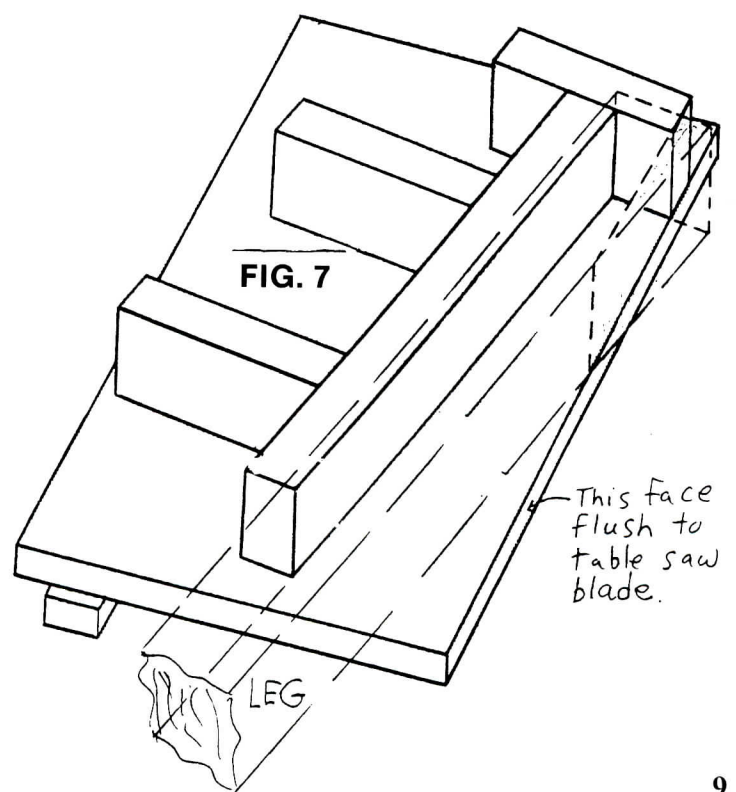
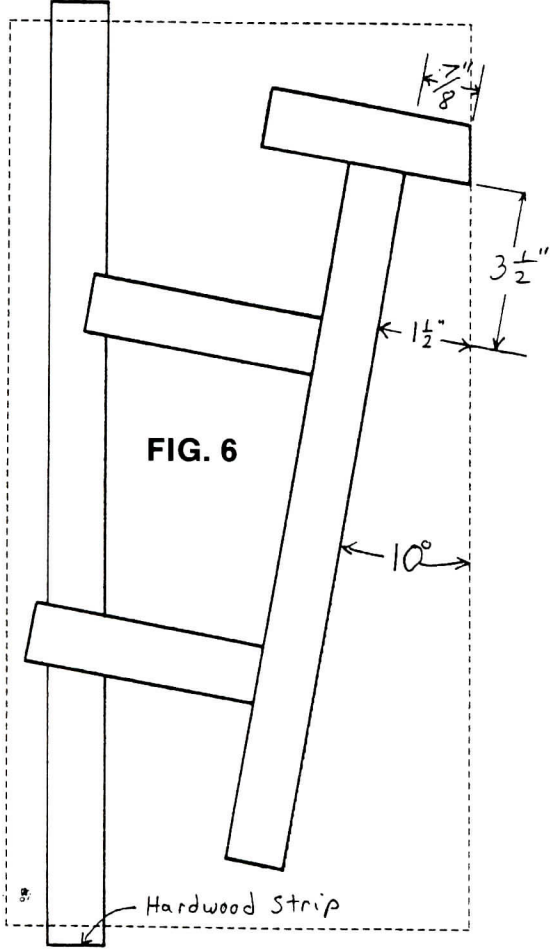
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 CORONA, CA. 91718

Module Corner

By Ted Larson



JIG FOR CUTTING 10° ANGLES



1997 LIONEL DEALER PREVIEW

By Pete Mihelich

Excitement was in the air as the 1997 Lionel Dealer Preview approached. However, this year Lionel chose to take the show on the road. If you recall, in previous years, all dealers were invited to Detroit. This year Lionel came to four cities: Las Vegas, January 19-21; Chicago, January 26-28; Atlanta, February 1-2 and New York, February 15-17, 1997.

On a snowy, cold Superbowl Sunday in January, I ventured to Chicago. I could have gone to the Preview on that day, but having grown up in Wisconsin, I had to watch the Packers play in their first Superbowl since 1968. Therefore, I scheduled my visit for Monday, January 27.

The Lionel team included Bob Ryder - National Sales Manager, Jim Bunte - Vice President Product Development, Steve Terry - Midwest Region Sales Manager and Tim Habel - Credit Manager. Also present was longtime Lionel employee Lenny Dean.

Bob Ryder started the slide presentation by describing the direction Lionel had taken this year. He indicated that their focus this year covers five areas. Number one is product development which includes design engineering, upgrading their suppliers and improving their production processes. Improved decorating and artwork is long overdue and is one of the key items that will be seen this year. The next goal is to strengthen the adult market. For us this means more accessories directed toward the O and S market. The other goals include an expanded youth and gift market and broadening their exposure through the marketing of catalog and specialty sets.

As far as product packaging is concerned, most Lionel hobby products will be in orange, blue and tan graphics with a UV varnish coat for protection. The American Flyer products for 1998 will return to the traditional blue and gold colors. These changes are intended to standardize the look, increase the identity, educate the consumer on the contents and protect the product. Low end products will have window boxes, and high end products will be in closed boxes without windows.

Locomotives will be in closed boxes with foam protection. Rolling stock will be in window boxes with vacuum packed loads. High end passenger cars will be in closed boxes with styrofoam. Accessories and powermodules will be in closed boxes with full color pictures on the boxes.

Bob reiterated that the target market for trains is mostly children ages 3-12, primarily boys. Parents and grandparents with children ages 3-12 will also be included in this target market.

For Lionel O gauge products, the Heritage Line will retain diecast trucks with a variety of road names. As an example, the Nickel Plate #2380 F3A-F3B will have added detail such as cab interior. The Classic Line will include Disney and Warner Brothers items. The 455 Sunoco Oil Derrick is in the final year of production due to an expiring license.

The good news for American Flyer fans is that a lot of old tools were found and discovered to be in good condition. This includes some pre and postwar tools of accessories and rolling stock. Jim Bunte indicated that stamping dies were not found. These would be for the production of side rods and the like. We will have to wait until 1998 for some of the items to be produced, even though test shots on some dies have already been successfully completed.

The American Flyer passenger set for 1997 will include the Santa Fe PA Alco with the war bonnet scheme. Four matching Santa Fe streamlined passenger cars will also be offered including a round end observation with lighted round drumhead. The pair of PAs will feature dual precision cam motors in one unit and authentic diesel horns in the unpowered unit. Headlights will be illuminated and couplers will be mechanical. The four passenger cars will also be illuminated with silhouette representations of Super Chief passengers bound for Los Angeles. *Gee, we can only operate these westbound, ha ha.* Each car will have an authentic prototype name. Each car will also have mechanical couplers and diecast painted trucks. The PAs and 4-car

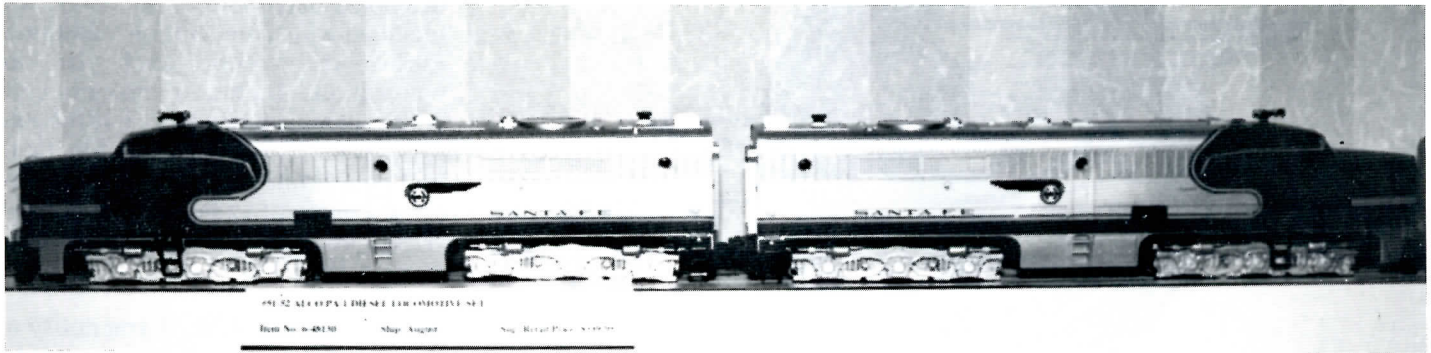
passenger car set will only be available as separate purchases.

There will be seven new S gauge freight cars in the '97 series. Leading the pack is a silver Southern Pacific caboose. This is the new caboose with offset cupola and illuminated interior. Four new boxcar paint schemes will be forthcoming as well. These include a Pennsylvania with the keystone logo, a Santa Fe with a map logo, an orange and green Great Northern and a Christmas car with much improved artwork. Besides the boxcars, the AF line will include a Silver Movie Premier Searchlight Car with SP markings and a Sunoco single dome chemical tank car. The Searchlight unit will be the same one as on the O-27 cars and will have a long life lamp in it. The lamp housing has more detail than the original Gilbert diecast unit and is much nicer than the plastic Gilbert shell used during the Pike Master era. Again, the expiring Sunoco license is the reasoning behind the chemical car.

Scheduled production dates are as follows: June - 3 prototype name boxcars, July - Sunoco tank car and searchlight car, Aug. - PAs, Sept. - caboose, Oct. - SF passenger cars followed by the Christmas car.

As for Railsounds II, the current Lionel circuit boards (2) will not fit into one AF unit/shell.

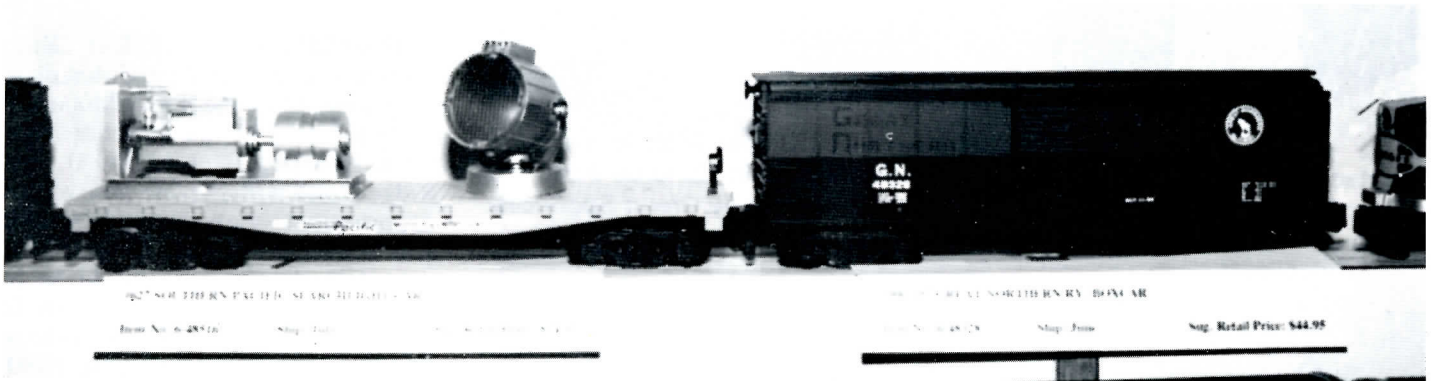
The 1997 line is a continuation of the past marketing strategy for American Flyer, however, Jim Bunte says that we now can expect a much expanded line for 1998 that will include some new items and accessories now that the original tooling has been uncovered. Jim recognizes that we've heard this before, that "Maybe next year will be the year," but I feel that Lionel now really has the tools and is ready to commit the funds to see exactly how well an expanded Flyer line will do. Until then - Pete.



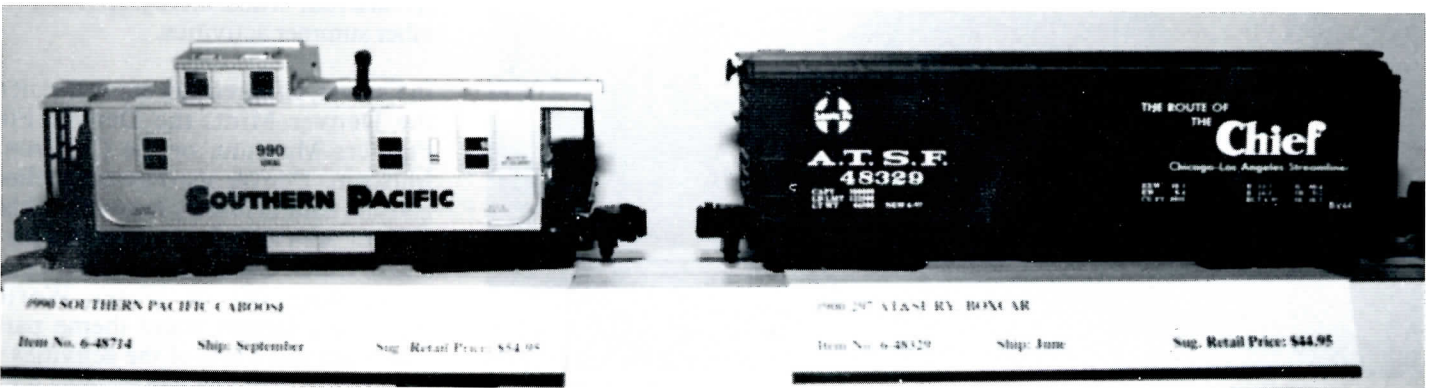
Santa Fe PAA pair due out in August of 1997.



Santa Fe Combination Coach & Baggage part of a 4 car package.



No. 627 S.P. Searchlight car and #48328 Great Northern Boxcar.



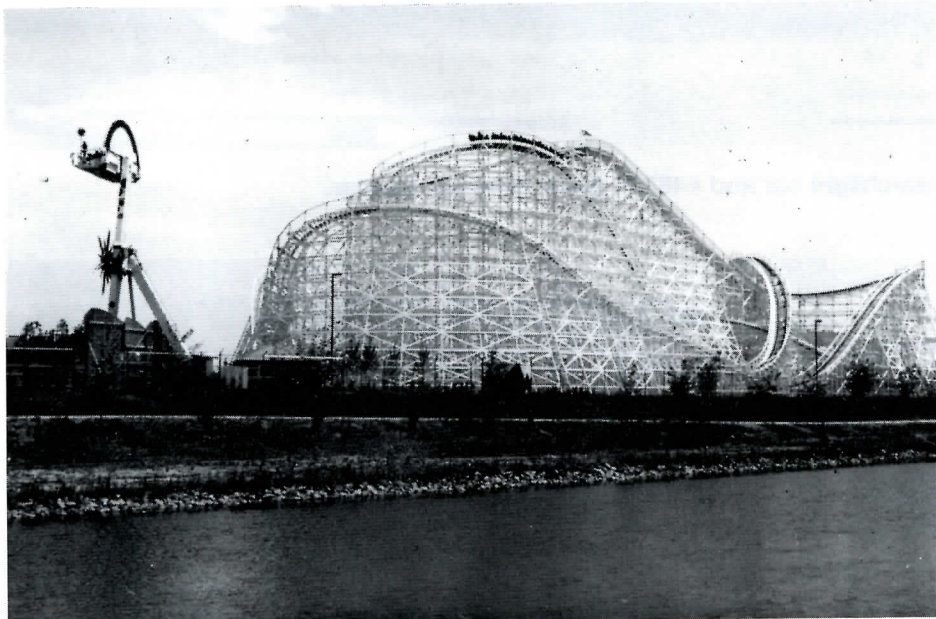
No. 990 S. P. Silver Caboose with ATSF #48329 Boxcar.



DENVER ZEPHYR '97 CONVENTION UPDATE



Spectacular scenery, like this view of Rocky Mountain National Park, are commonplace in Colorado. *Photo by Glenn Sponholtz*



For those needing more of a thrill than a train ride, nearby Elych Gardens Amusement Park is the place to go. *Photo by Glenn Sponholtz*

TABLES: For manufacturers and dealers, a maximum of two tables are included with a registration, additional tables are \$30.00 each for the convention. Include a business card with your registration to receive this rate for tables. If space is available, there will be a limited number of tables for private sellers at \$5.00 per table per day. If you are interested, contact me after May 1, 1997.

REFUND POLICY: If you notify us by June 15, 1997, all money will be returned. If you notify us after June 15, 1997 or are a no-show at the convention, only your registration fee will be returned. Fees for tours or the banquet will be returned if your place can be cancelled or sold to another person.

OPEN HOUSE: On Wednesday, July 9th, there will be a welcome open house at the Glenn Sponholtz residence from 7 to 9 PM. The layout will be open (and running) and dessert will be served. You will have to provide your own transportation.

COLO. RAILROAD MUSEUM: You will receive a ticket to the Colorado Railroad Museum with your registration that can be used at any time during the convention.

NON-RAIL ACTIVITIES: Since 1859 people have come to Colorado for one reason, to see the Rocky Mountains. A trip to Rocky Mountain National Park while traveling over 12,000 ft. Trail Ridge Road will provide you with an opportunity to view mountain wildlife and scenery at their best. Other mountain destinations could be the victorian town of Georgetown for shopping or the town of Fairplay to see Southpark City, an authentic 1880's Colorado town. The ski areas of Winter Park and Breckenridge provide gondola rides up the slopes, mountain bike rentals, four-wheel drive jeep tours, and other summer activities.

In Denver, children can enjoy a visit to the Denver Mint, the Denver Fire Fighters Museum, or the Children's Museum. Denver also has an excellent zoo and natural history museum. Other Denver area activities could include a trip to Elych Gardens amusement park or cooling off at Water World, America's largest water theme park. These are just a few of the activities in the Denver area that can provide a fun summer vacation for all the family.

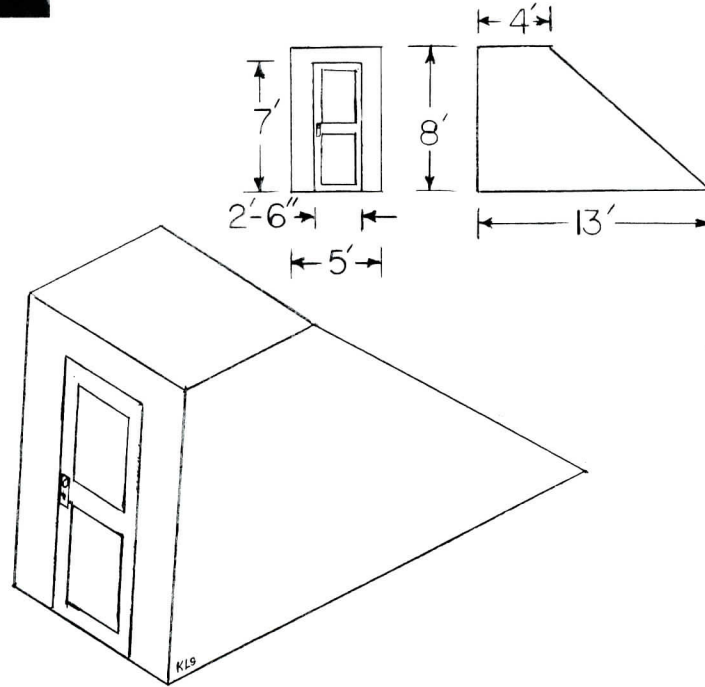
Just imagine scenes from atop a New York City multi-story tenement apartment such as that conjured up by the rhythm and blues singing group, the Drifters, in their popular song "Up On The Roof," and you will see the need for the following project to dress up your flat rooftops.

This project is a direct result of having gone on one of the tours during the 1996 National convention in Dearborn last summer. While visiting the Holly O scale club, Bob Werre called my attention to a multi-story building in the foreground. On the flat roof, painted forest green, was a stair access cupola with a door. After the, perhaps politically incorrect, comments of conversion projects for AF bumpers, we decided that it would make a good Short and Easy project. Of course, the building itself is not a Short and Easy project. The sketches themselves are fairly self-explanatory. The cupola can be made of wood, styrene or brass - or an AF #730 Bumper (just kidding). The door can be scratchbuilt or you can use a Grandt Line #4003 door. The dimensions can be varied to suit. The roof can be either tarpaper, corrugated tin, sheet metal or whatever. Paint should match the building trim.

Short and Easy

by Kent L. Singer

UP ON THE ROOF



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 being completed in one or two evenings. You needn't worry about drawings or photographs. We can do the drawings and have photos taken. All that is 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: **Short and Easy, c/o Kent L. Singer, 912 North Rogers Ave., Endicott, NY 13760.**

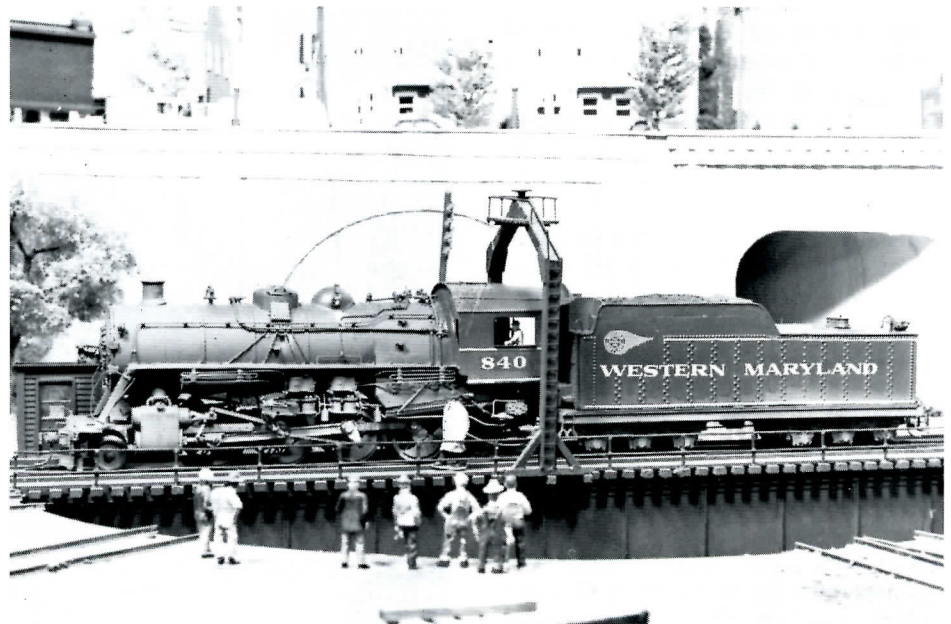
NASG CONVENTION '97 CONTEST NOTICE

From Robert L. Sherwood,
Contest Chairman

Contest entry forms are available at the following address, SASE appreciated.

NASG '97 Contest Forms
c/o Robert L. Sherwood
410 E. 24th St.
Cheyenne, WY 82001-3201
E-mail: softmoods @ ted.net

Please indicate whether you desire entry forms for MODELS, PHOTOGRAPHS, or both. Allow 7-10 days for return mailing. Forms may be copied as required if you need more than one entry per category.



O.L. McDonald poses next to the big Western Maryland 2-8-0 as his workmen look on. This is his latest restored steam locomotive, the largest consolidation ever built. He liked the colorful lettering so much that it wasn't painted over and the Spiral Hill name applied. *Photo by Frank Titman*

Meet an S gauger

Craig O'Connell

by Bill Krause

Like many an S gauger, Craig O'Connell's fascination with model railroading started with American Flyer trains. But it wasn't the usual train-around-the-tree type of beginning either. Craig's dad, fondly known to his co-workers as Okie, worked in the paint department of the A.C. Gilbert Co. factory in New Haven, Connecticut. On weekends Okie would walk his son over to the factory's employee store with its operating model railroad, showroom catalogs and the latest AF equipment.

It wasn't until Craig was ten that the O'Connells could afford to buy their son the AF set of his dreams. It was the "Keystone Rocket Freight" set featuring the 21004 Peñnsy 0-6-0 with sloped back tender. Almost 40 years later, the set still runs on Craig's hi-rail layout.

As a teen Craig dabbled in HO before the hobby took a back seat to more serious concerns such as college, marriage and career. Two decades later, in the mid-eighties, Craig returned to the fold. "I picked up an issue of the *S Gaugian* featuring Brooks Stover's Buffalo Creek & Gauley layout," recalls Craig, "and that was enough to rekindle the spirit." Craig dug out his 1957 vintage Keystone set and started hanging out around Harry Gordon's train shop in New Haven. He even contributed an article about his dad to Don Heimburger's book, *American Flyer Features*.

Craig started building his layout using Brooks Stover's formula of using Gargraves track with AF turnouts. *Actually, Brooks used wooden ties glued in place under standard AF track.* Craig had just framed out the benchwork of a layout, when he made a move to neighboring Hamden, just a couple of blocks away from A.C. Gilbert's former estate.

Six years ago Craig joined the Connecticut S Gaugers. He recalls, "not having a clue as to what these guys were talking about." Terms like open frog, code 100 rail, #8 turnouts and the like were a foreign language to one reared on AF sectional track. With notebook



in hand Craig would attend regular meetings of the Connecticut S Gaugers and quietly take copious notes. He joined the NASG and signed up for a local adult education course on model railroading.

Today Craig's layout uses DC power and code 148 American Models flextrack. Thanks to the addition of

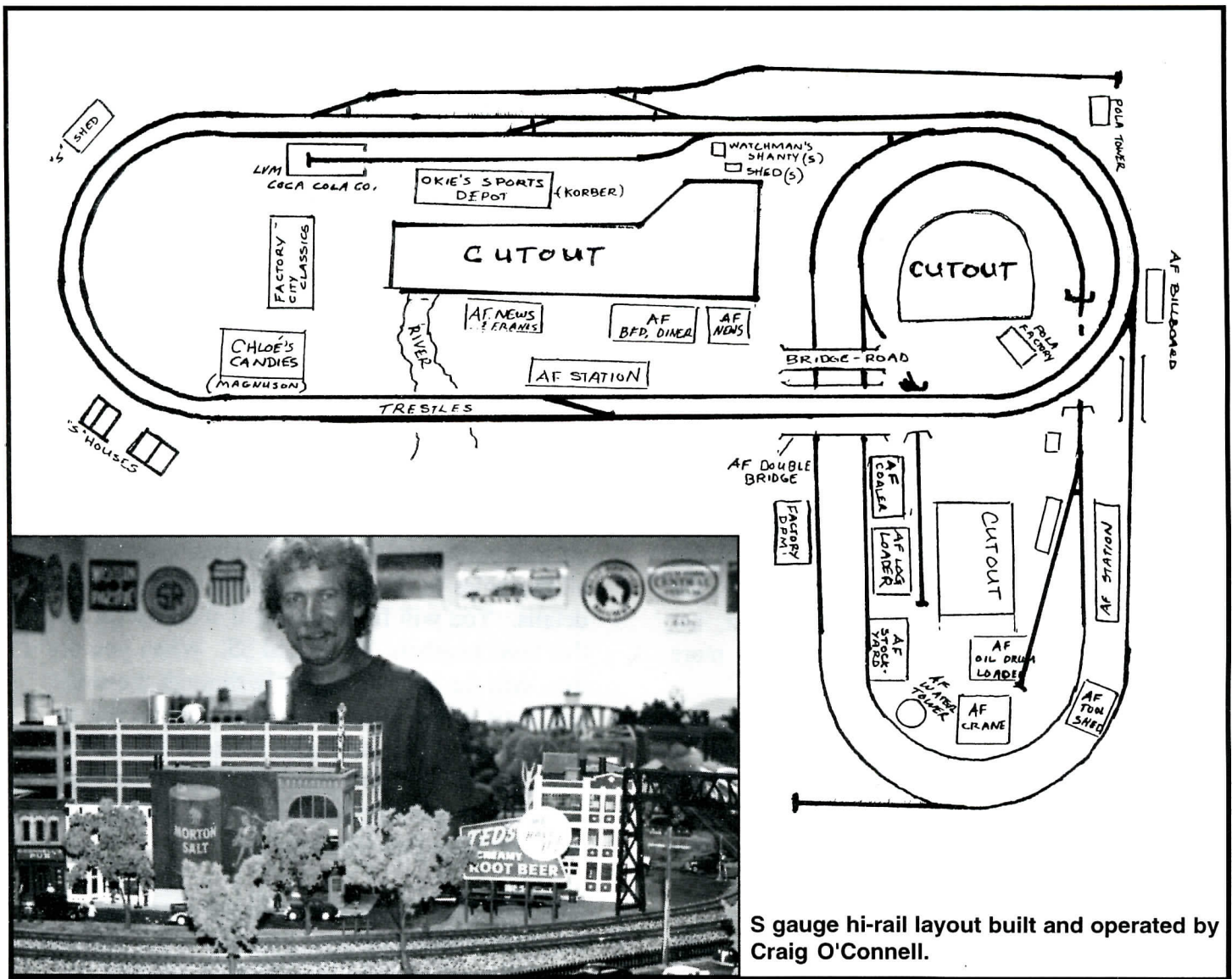
closed frog turnouts from Terry's Model Railroad Supplies, he can now run anything from American Flyer to scale motive power and rolling stock.

Craig builds many of his own structures, either by kitbashing or scratchbuilding. He has one area of the layout equipped with pushbuttons for AF accessories set aside for kids. As a first grade teacher, Craig brings his classes over to the house for operating sessions featuring AF steamers that smoke and choo-choo. What's the favorite of the children you ask? Why it's the rocket launcher. It's the same one that attracted Craig back in 1957 and came with his first AF set.

For Craig the hobby has spawned many new interests including rail travel, computer networking, art and photography. He describes model railroading as an art-form that has sharpened his eye for color, perspective, texture, nature and detail. "It was when I started photographing rooftops and rocks that my wife really thought I had lost it," Craig adds. Over the past few years Craig and his family have traveled over 20,000 miles across America on Amtrak. His "Friends of Amtrak" internet effort has adherents from all across the country. Craig has also established a World Wide Web Page devoted to S Scale Model Railroading. So if you're on the internet look for it at - <http://www.connix.com/~crocon/sscale.html>.



Craig entertains his summer school class with a trip to his layout. Here youngsters learn how real railroads perform their work - they are also introduced to S gauge.
Photo by Bill Krause



Comparing the upcoming SW9 from S-Helper to the photo above of a PRR SW7, note that the SW9 has no upper vents along the hood. This was the Jeannette, Pa., dedicated local switcher which is shown here in 1972. It replaced a venerable Baldwin which was the former mainstay.

Photo by Jeff Madden

ASSEMBLING 40' PRS BOXCARS

By Richard Lind

From the *Call Board*, the newsletter of the Potomac Valley S Gaugers

I don't understand why I've never seen a review or assembly article for Pacific Rail Shop's forty foot boxcars. The kits are wonderful. You will find all the detail in these kits that you formerly saw only in contest winning models. There are a lot of parts, but they fit well, so the kit goes together easily. In fact, I consider this kit the easiest to assemble in S scale because everything is included. You don't have to stop and figure out how to find the time and references to make missing details. PRS has raised the level of detail in their boxcar to the level that model airplane and model car enthusiasts have expected for twenty or more years.

I've assembled two of these cars, and I'm working on three more. What follows are some of the approaches I've used. You may have your own procedures that work just as well or better. If you do, please share them in this newsletter.

The first thing you'll need to do is select a touch-up paint color. You will need some touch-up paint for every little spot where sprue gates have been removed from parts. The plastic turns a little milky where gates are removed. I made a color comparison chart by dividing a sheet of styrene with masking tape into sections and painting each section with a different boxcar color. There are many. I also left room to label each color. This is necessary because the color of the paint in the bottle is not the same as the same product dry on styrene.

While we're making things, you may want to make something like super fine emery boards. I use 0.040" thick styrene strips cut a little narrower than double stick Scotch brand tape. I attach wet-or-dry sandpaper to the strips with the double stick tape and trim the edges so the sandpaper is flush with the edges of the stick. I have a stick with 240 grit, 400 grit and 600 grit. The 240 grit stick is useful for cutting, and



others are useful for smoothing worked areas for painting.

Paint the underframe and brake details with the touch-up paint you've selected. If you want the underside of the car to be black, and it's to look relatively new, paint the bottom of the car with Badger Accuflex flat black, which matches the black plastic underframe details well.

At this point you will want to clear paint from all the holes in the body intended for mounting details. You will find three drill sizes useful for this task: numbers 70, 64 and 55. When you do this, drill the holes completely through the sides and ends of the car. This will enable you to position each part and glue it from inside the body, which will give you very clean joints and reduce paint damage from solvent cements (This was a tip from Don Thompson).

You will need to add weight to the car to follow the NMRA recommended practice. Two ounces of additional weight are needed if you use Northwest Short Line wheel sets and 2-1/4 ounces of additional weight will be needed if you use the plastic wheels that come in the kit. I use A-Line self adhesive weights positioned over the trucks with pieces of Evergreen HO 6x12 glued in place to center the weights as they are being pushed into place.

Install the underframe and train line.

If you use the coupler boxes provided with the PRS 1937 A.A.R. boxcar kit, the couplers will be at the correct height, but the coupled length will be too long for a car with normal draft gear travel. After reviewing *The Official Railway Equipment Register*, I selected 44'-3" as an average coupled length for the 1937 cars, and made a template as shown in Fig. 1 for mounting Kadee 802 coupler pockets. This template is notched so it won't rest on top of the

ASSEMBLING 40 FOOT PRS BOXCARS, CONTINUED

diagonal braces in the corners of the floor frames.

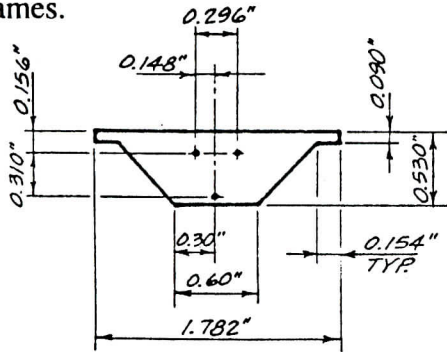


FIG. 1

The vertical dimension of the Kadee coupler box is less than the coupler box provided in the kit. If you choose to use Kadee coupler boxes with your PRS 40 foot cars, you will need to add 0.020 inch thick washers between the trucks and the body or install 0.020 inch thick shims between the Kadee 802 coupler boxes and the body. The cars look better from the end if the coupler boxes are shimmed down. Fig. 2 shows dimensions for a shim that covers the entire coupler box lid to increase the apparent depth of the center sill extending beyond the car end.

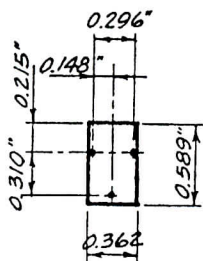


FIG. 2

Paint the coupler box, lid and shim the same color as the underframe.

Cutting the parts from the sprues can be tricky because the details are made from styrene, rather than Delrin. You can bend the parts to some degree, but it isn't advisable. Ladder rungs and grabs cannot be subjected to compression or tension without breaking. I got around this by carefully dismembering the sprue with my Xuron side cutting nippers before attempting to remove parts from sprues. Don Thompson says he used a saw to remove sprue material surrounding the ladders.

I used a two step process for cutting parts free. First I cut close to the sprue with a new number 17 Xacto blade. Then I trimmed the remnants of the sprues (gates) from the part with the nippers and sanded it smooth if necessary with the 240 grit sanding stick.

Cutting the thin pipes and rods free is a little dicey. I found that the gates are best cut off by holding the Xacto blade at about a 45 degree angle to the table top, with the edge parallel to the part. As you push the blade down to make the cut, the part will roll a little with the blade and very little, if any, part of the gates will remain. Very carefully remove any remnants of the gates that remain. Don't whittle, or the part will break in tension.

The instructions suggest gathering the ends of four brake pipes in a dimple in the triple valve. If you do this, you'll go nuts because each pipe has to be cut exactly to length for this to work. It's much, much easier to drill four holes arranged in a square partly through the middle section of the triple valve to receive the ends of the pipes. Use a number 74 drill. This way, the length of the pipes will not be so critical and the pipes will be properly arranged at the triple valve.

All the placard boards are the same size, which may not be correct for certain cars. When you attach the placard boards to the ends of the car, center them between the rivets on the ribs. I sand the paint off the back of the placard boards and scrape the paint off the portions of the ribs to be covered by the boards. Then with the top edge of the placard board centered on the uppermost of those ribs, I apply Tenax-7R with a #00 paint brush. Then slide the board up until it is centered on both ribs, straighten it, and apply solvent cement on the bottom edge of the board. When it's dry, touch it up if you need to.

I hope you'll enjoy building these kits as much as I have. Now that this article is done, I can get back to building more of them. *RL*

S TRACKPLANNING

HOW TO DESIGN A HELIX

By David A. Avedesian

After reading many track design books, I was not able to find information that would assist me in laying out a helix and how much space (footprint) is required.

I developed the following charts to be used as a look up table to assist you in determining the physical size of a helix you might need. The key concepts and questions that I had to understand about a helix and its use follows:

- They are bigger than you think
- The maximum grade has to be less in the helix than on the main layout.
- One full 360 degree turn will give you a rise of the gross clearance height.
- Roadbed, track, train and free space profiles need to be kept to a minimum.
- What is the maximum grade (%) that you will accept?
- What is the maximum footprint that you can provide for the helix?
- What is the gross clearance required from railhead to railhead?

I would like to take a few minutes to review the effects of the above statements and questions. The lower the gross clearance between railhead below to railhead above, the easier it is to keep the grade low - a desirable thing. The effect of just 1/4 inch in clearance can change the grade by 0.2%.

When operating in a helix, you must overcome two problems: 1) elevation and 2) curves. Both will reduce the performance of your motive power. The effect of reduced motive power is the necessity of using shorter trains. The lower the grade percentage, the longer train you can have. There are two ways to lower grades: 1) Reduce the railhead to railhead clearance. 2) Increase the radius of the helix - which in turn increases

the length of track in one full turn.

Once the grade and gross clearance has been determined, you can use the attached tables to help determine the geometry of the helix. Let's look at the following example:

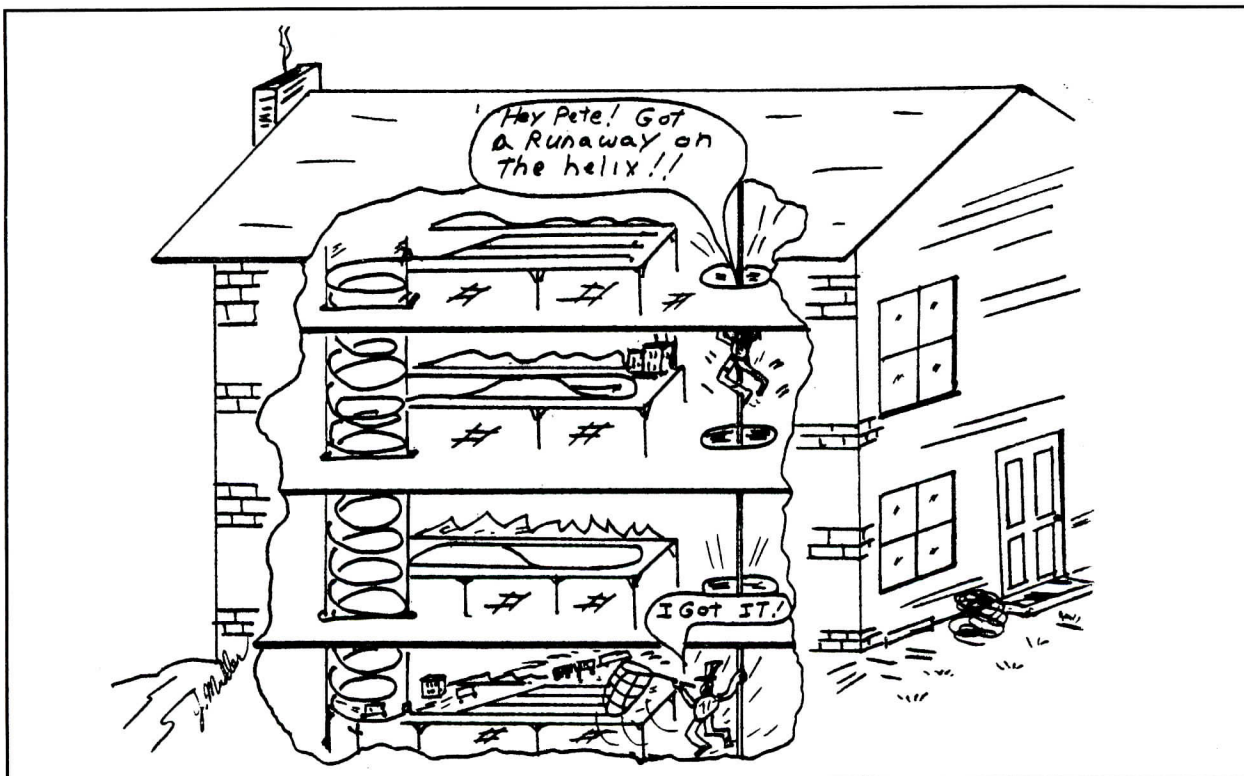
Gross clearance is 4.75 inches; percent of grade is 2.8%.
Find the intersection of 2.8% and 4.75 inches in the top section. By gridding down and across, you discover the result is a radius of 27 inches. Now look at the smaller box on the left, and you find that this requires a diameter of track of 54 inches which translates to 5 feet (allowing some clearance) square of benchwork. In other words, a helix with these dimensions will take up 5' x 5' of table space. The table also shows that 27" radius will take about 170" (14.1 ft.) of track per loop. You can use this figure to help in figuring out how much track to buy.

As another example, for a layout needing 46 inch radius turns, you would need about 8 foot square of benchwork to handle this helix.

The bottom table lets you know how many helix turns you need to give the desired rise. For example, if your top deck is 16 inches higher than your bottom deck, then take 16 inches and divide it by the 4.75 inches gross clearance in one full turn. Your helix would require 3.4 turns to make the rise to the upper deck.

In areas with scenery where the helix is disguised behind a mountain or a backdrop, it is a good idea to leave peephole windows for each level so you can check a train's progress. A light inside helps also. Another option is to put a helix in say a furnace room so that it wouldn't need any scenery while still being completely accessible.

It's also a good idea to solder all rail joints in the helix portion to eliminate any electrical feed problems.



Track Plan of the Century... State of the art design with multi-floor helix to each level and firepole.

BOSTON AND MARYLAND RAILROAD
 TRACKWORK WORKSHEET
 PREPARED BY: DAVID AVEDESAN
 DECEMBER 9, 1994
 FILE NAME: RRGRADES.WK3

CLEARANCE - GROSS INCHES

PERCENT GRADE	4-1/2	4-5/8	4-3/4	4-7/8	5-0	5-1/8	5-1/4	5-3/8	5-1/2
	4.50	4.63	4.75	4.88	5.00	5.13	5.25	5.38	5.50
5.0	14.32	14.72	15.12	15.52	15.92	16.31	16.71	17.11	17.51
4.8	14.92	15.34	15.75	16.16	16.58	16.99	17.41	17.82	18.24
4.6	15.57	16.00	16.43	16.87	17.30	17.73	18.16	18.60	19.03
4.4	16.28	16.73	17.18	17.63	18.09	18.54	18.99	19.44	19.89
4.2	17.05	17.53	18.00	18.47	18.95	19.42	19.89	20.37	20.84
4.0	17.90	18.40	18.90	19.40	19.89	20.39	20.89	21.39	21.88
3.8	18.85	19.37	19.89	20.42	20.94	21.46	21.99	22.51	23.04
3.6	19.89	20.45	21.00	21.55	22.10	22.66	23.21	23.76	24.32
3.4	21.06	21.65	22.23	22.82	23.41	23.99	24.58	25.16	25.75
3.2	22.38	23.00	23.62	24.25	24.87	25.49	26.11	26.73	27.35
3.0	23.87	24.54	25.20	25.86	26.53	27.19	27.85	28.52	29.18
2.8	25.58	26.29	27.00	27.71	28.42	29.13	29.84	30.55	31.26
2.6	27.55	28.31	29.08	29.84	30.61	31.37	32.14	32.90	33.67
2.4	29.84	30.67	31.50	32.33	33.16	33.99	34.82	35.64	36.47
2.2	32.55	33.46	34.36	35.27	36.17	37.08	37.98	38.88	39.79
2.0	35.81	36.80	37.80	38.79	39.79	40.78	41.78	42.77	43.77

RADIUS - INCHES

RAD/IN	DIA/IN	PERI/IN	PERI/FT
15	30	94	7.9
16	32	101	8.4
17	34	107	8.9
18	36	113	9.4
19	38	119	9.9
20	40	126	10.5
21	42	132	11.0
22	44	138	11.5
23	46	145	12.0
24	48	151	12.6
25	50	157	13.1
26	52	163	13.6
27	54	170	14.1
28	56	176	14.7
29	58	182	15.2
30	60	188	15.7

RAD/IN	DIA/IN	PERI/IN	PERI/FT
31	62	195	16.2
32	64	201	16.8
33	66	207	17.3
34	68	214	17.8
35	70	220	18.3
36	72	226	18.8
37	74	232	19.4
38	76	239	19.9
39	78	245	20.4
40	80	251	20.9
41	82	258	21.5
42	84	264	22.0
43	86	270	22.5
44	88	276	23.0
45	90	283	23.6
46	92	289	24.1

GROSS CLEARANCE CALCULATION

FREE SPACE	0.13	1/8	0.13	1/8	0.25	1/4	0.25	1/4
FRANKLYN TRAIN	3.75	3-3/4	3.75	3-3/4	3.75	3-3/4	3.75	3-3/4
TRACK HEIGHT	0.25	1/4	0.25	1/4	0.25	1/4	0.38	3/8
ROAD BED	0.25	1/4	0.50	1/2	0.50	1/2	0.50	1/2
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GROSS CLEARANCE	4.38	4-3/8	4.63	4-5/8	4.75	4-3/4	4.88	4-7/8



customers and railroad crews.

Depot agents assigned to either nearby Aplington's Type B depot, or Ackley's magnificent brick chateau to the west no doubt handled Austinville business by telephoning or by simply driving over to find what various trains had left or who might want to ship by rail.

The bill box on the side facing the track protected shipping papers and instructions from the weather, and the sliding door allowed placing items inside for protection. At the time this structure appeared, some farmers may have still shipped milk by rail. They would have placed full cans in, and retrieved empty ones from, such depots as Austinville's .CC&P still has several "creamery crossings," spurs, sidetracks and so on named in the timetables for when those enterprises existed at or near the station locations.

Type C depots apparently followed no set architectural plan, or standard. Many may have "evolved" based on need and what was on hand to construct them. For proof, look at the photo of the Type C at Lyle, Minnesota, which has an extension for section gang use and which also included a base radio station.

Austinville's depot is gone as of July, 1996. Others exist on borrowed time. The ones at Sherwood and Deloit, IA, are on CC&P-ICRR's Omaha extension

Front and right view of Type C depot at Austinville, Iowa. These depots replaced larger agent depots during and after WWII. Depots like this were most likely "agentless" and served by agents of nearby larger towns.

Photo by Bob Nicholson

A simple station structure

ILLINOIS CENTRAL'S IOWA DIVISION TYPE "C" DEPOTS

By Robert Nicholson

When the Illinois Central (IC) combined the independent fragment railroads creating the Iowa division, Iowa was still a frontier. Therefore, many early IC depots had second story living quarters for local station agents and their families.

At the start of WWII, IC began to replace those original depots. The massive government effort to use other peoples' money to make the world safe for the Big Truck was underway, and they no longer filled IC's needs. Among other things, most local agents no longer needed living quarters provided them.

The new depots were designed to be strictly functional and used materials salvaged from the older depots. They followed one of three plans: Type A was for those communities still providing ample passenger revenues, Type B was for those focusing mainly on freight, and for communities which no longer required an assigned agent received a Type C structure, such as those shown in the photos of Austinville, IA.

An ICRR Type C depot, hardly more

than a mere shed, was where customers did business with the railroad. Station name signs adorned each side of these little depots for recognition by both



IC Type C Depot in Austinville, Iowa, would make a nice one-evening structure project. This depot was torn down in June, 1996, but similar ones can still be found in Iowa and Minnesota.

Photo by Bob Nicholson

in western Iowa. They, like the the Austinville depot, rest on concrete slabs with concrete block perimeters. The total foundation dimensions are 10' x 12'. I figure out structure dimensions by by tacking a large 6' modeling scale to the buildings in the photos. (See plans also).

Illinois Central's Type C depots could make great little one evening modeling projects. The information provided was with the help of the *Central Standard Times* which is published by the Chicago Central Historical Society. For those who aren't aware, the Illinois Central has re-acquired the Chicago Central & Pacific.

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No depot scene is complete without the "necessary backhouse" under a spreading Box Elder tree. This IC outhouse is in Central City, IA.

Photos by Robert Nicholson

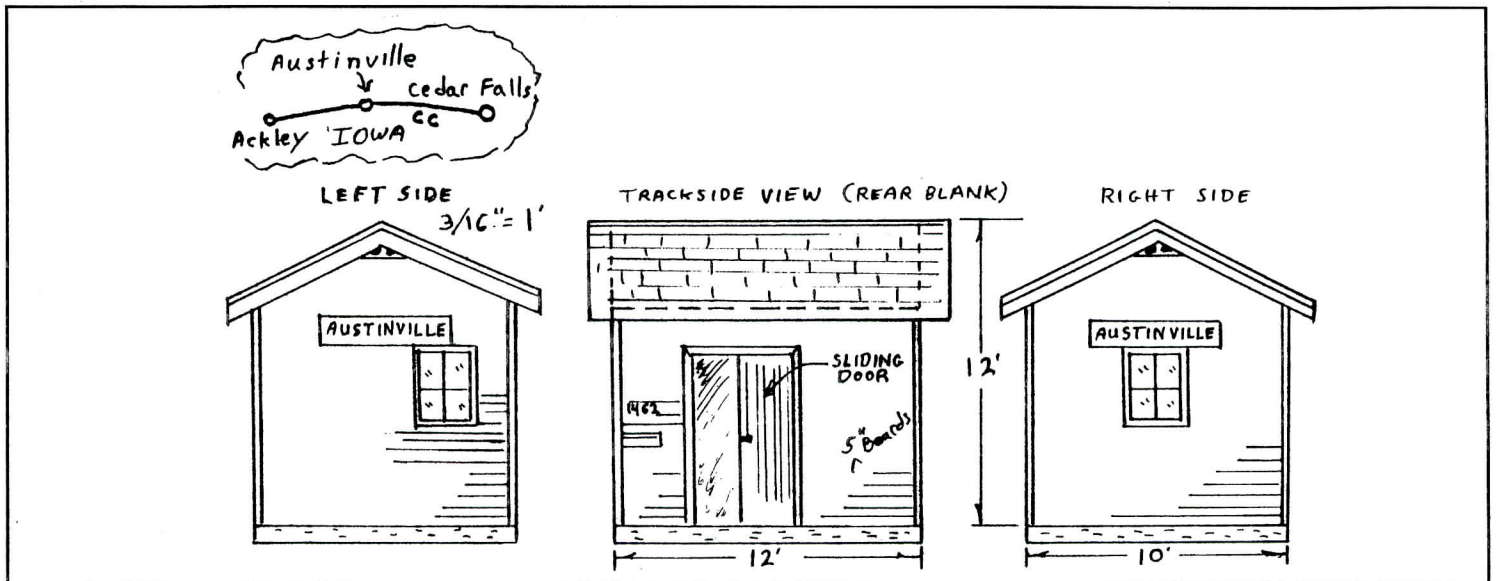
map



Rear view of Austinville depot. Note offset window on this side. Board spacing is about 5 inches. Photo by Bob Nicholson



An expanded Type C depot in Lyle, Minnesota, includes a track gang portion. Note pole for radio antenna at the rear. Photo by Bob Nicholson



RAIL MAIL

Dear Jeff: I just recently became an NASG member and have acquainted myself with S scale (I have some AF equipment), and I am most impressed with the scale. I would like to model some Lackawanna equipment, but I have found, much to my surprise, that there are no plastic versions in S of EMD E8s, F3s or FM Trainmasters. I'm surprised because these locomotives seem to be universal in other gauges.

Am I alone in hoping that these particular diesels will be produced someday in S?
Ed Kenny, Bayonne, NJ.

Yes, it does seem strange that the plastic diesel manufacturers have not mass produced an EMD E unit or F3/F7. I wouldn't be surprised to see one or the other within a year or two. The FM Trainmaster (6 wheel truck) might be successful, but roads using them would be a little less universal. But, you can get some plastic Fs and Es with a little effort. American Models makes an FP7 which can be shortened to an F3/F7, and a B unit is promised soon. American Models locomotives are available in either scale or Hi-rail versions. Wabash Valley Models, 2nd and High St., Roanoke, IN 46783 also has some F unit shells which you should be able to adapt to an American Models FP7 frame or an AM GP9 frame. You can get a resin cast E8 or E7 unpainted shell from American Hi-rail, 37695 Jeanette Ct., Spring Grove, IL 60081. These shells are \$30 each or \$35 with headlight lens. You might inquire about powered units - these are sometimes available on a limited basis. The latest Scenery Unlimited Catalog lists an Omnicon F7 (plastic shell) for \$189.95. - Jeff

Gentlemen: I am new to S scale, but I do have 7 years experience with an HO modular club (San Luis Obispo MRC in California) so I know some of the agonies and ecstasies of this type of layout.

In the October, 1996, *Dispatch* in Ted Larson's column, he suggests that the purpose of having modules is to show off rolling stock. I think there are other answers too.

Nothing kills the appearance of a model train more than seeing it whipping around a 180 degree turn of a tight radius. This reduces the finest loco and rolling stock models to appearing to be on a Christmas tree layout. In our HO club, for example, we used 60 inch radius. The equivalent in S might be too large to be practical, but...

In the February, 1996, issue of *S/Sn3 Modeling Guide* I was impressed by the layout of Kelvin White. If you haven't seen the article, it features about 20 feet of exposed layout with a 6 or 8 foot sector plate (a platform for taking trains on and off the layout). The idea with this layout is to have a train passing realistically through a scene for maximum "reality impact". The single train does some switching along its run. Incidentally, we found on our HO modular layout that viewers were fascinated as much by switching as runbys.

My idea for an S scale display layout would be to have about 20 feet of visible track with a sector plate at each end fed by

a track leading behind the backdrop. The sector plates would be long enough to hold a train (10 ft.). They operate like a big transfer table. Trains would pass through the modeled part of the modular layout, run onto the sector plate, and then be shuttled via hidden trackage back to the other end to repeat the run. Two trains could operate this way - one in each direction.

At the NMRA convention last year in Long Beach, California, there was a modular layout similar to the one I described, but trains just shuttled back and forth without the sector plate. Still, this layout was a hit because of its appearance and smooth operation. I felt this was superior to round and round operation.

I would like to see S take advantage of this type of layout for public demonstrations. It would be no harder to build and staff than the usual conventional designs.
Art Armstrong, Los Osos, CA.

Article Ideas: Some ideas for articles which could be submitted to the *Dispatch* for the rest of us to read — lightweight module construction, ideas from clinics from non-S conventions, member projects mentioned in the *Club Sandwich* (such as the Secret Project), descriptions (how-tos) of contest entries, prototype info on available cars in S, and articles on or by manufacturers.

A question on a different subject? Does anybody in S use an On3 hopper for standard S gauge lettered for their own railroad. I don't think these match up exactly to a prototype, so if you get let me know your road name, I could letter some up and use them on my road.

Ted Larson

Good ideas Ted. Yes, the Dispatch is always looking for articles. Maybe this will give members some food for thought. I'll be glad to assist any willing authors who might need help with drawings, etc. - Jeff

Need Promotional Items: Back last year, I wrote someone in the NASG requesting promotional literature to pass out at a local show. I got no response, so I'm repeating the request.
Ron Scott, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada.

Ron, contact Alan Evans or our new Promotions Chairman, Joel Lebovitz. Addresses and phone numbers are in the Membership Directory. Or if anybody else can help Ron, his address and phone number are also in the directory.

Inexpensive Buildings and Vehicles in S: Toy Liquidators, found in outlet centers, are a good place to find 1:64 Ertl vehicles and buildings and other diecast vehicles such as AHL trucks. Prices for Ertl pickups are as low as \$1.50. AHL trucks range from \$4.50 to \$10.00. Ertl buildings are discounted pretty heavily if you can find them. These stores are prevalent in outlet malls which are usually along the interstates.

Dave Agler, Alpharetta, GA.

Is It Modular or Portable? I'm concerned about the growing confusion in the minds of many S gaugers as to the full meaning of building modular layouts. I found this confusion even existed in the NASG business meeting discussions at the Dearborn Inn last summer. Many clubs themselves confuse this issue. I read that this or that club has plans for building modules, but in reading on I soon learn that they are really

building units for a portable layout. This is often the case when track is American Flyer or a similar type.

The IN word today is "module"! If the units must be reassembled in the same order each time, the layout is a **PORTABLE** one. If the units can be reassembled in different patterns, perhaps combined with sections built by other modelers, the layout then could be termed **MODULAR**. Both portable approaches have their distinct advantages. True portable layouts can be put together faster (A fits to B and so on). Modular layouts take more time to plan and put together, but can be more complex, more flexible and often more interesting.

Clubs or individual S gaugers can build one or more modular units. These can be hooked up with permanent layouts or can join forces with other units built in accordance with NASG Module Standards to form the most interesting layout configurations. The joy I had in having my 4 units being a part of the gigantic NMRA/NASG Convention layouts in Pittsburgh and Valley Forge were beyond description. Maybe we could use a Modular Chairman in the NASG to stimulate the interest and direction we had from Don DeWitt from 1988 to 1993.

Bill Krause, Connecticut S Gaugers

Note: Ted Larson is not a Modular Chairman, he is the editor of The Module Corner.

Miller Recall: Enjoyed the December issue of the *Dispatch*. Regarding the Miller article, I met him several years ago at an NASG convention - nice gentleman. I have the Miller switcher with the Miller Power Trucks. I am not enthused

with their operation - too hard to control. There is one thing the article forgot to mention, and that is for years the only wheel sets available were the aluminum ones he manufactured. Many of us old-timers have quite a bit of equipment rolling on these in Northeastern and Super Scale trucks.
Ernie Horr, Spokane, WA.

NASG NEWS continued from page 4

The S Helper car will be a Pennsylvania Railroad flatcar painted red oxide with an Ertl roadgrader load. Special lettering will read "Return when empty to York, Pa." Cost for this car will be \$45.00. Members need not specify hi-rail or scale since S Helper cars include both wheelsets.

The Downs car will be a "Trusweet" 23,000 gallon tank in 3 #s and painted black. One side of this exclusive NASG car will have the logo which is a white background with green and yellow letters. On the other side of the car are the words Trusweet and Amaizo. This modern tank car is 9 7/8" long as compared to a Flyer New Haven coach which is 10 1/2". Members will need to specify whether they want hi-rail, which includes non-operating couplers and hi-rail wheelsets (operating Flyer couplers add \$1.50) or scale which comes with code 110 wheelsets and KD 802s. Cost is \$40 or \$41.50.

Ordering information will be in the mail soon to all paid-up members. The S-Helper and Downs cars will be available in July and the Lionel car in August. Note: Doug Peck will be taking the orders for the Lionel car via the normal advertisements, but John Foley (Eastern VP) will be receiving the orders for the other two cars.

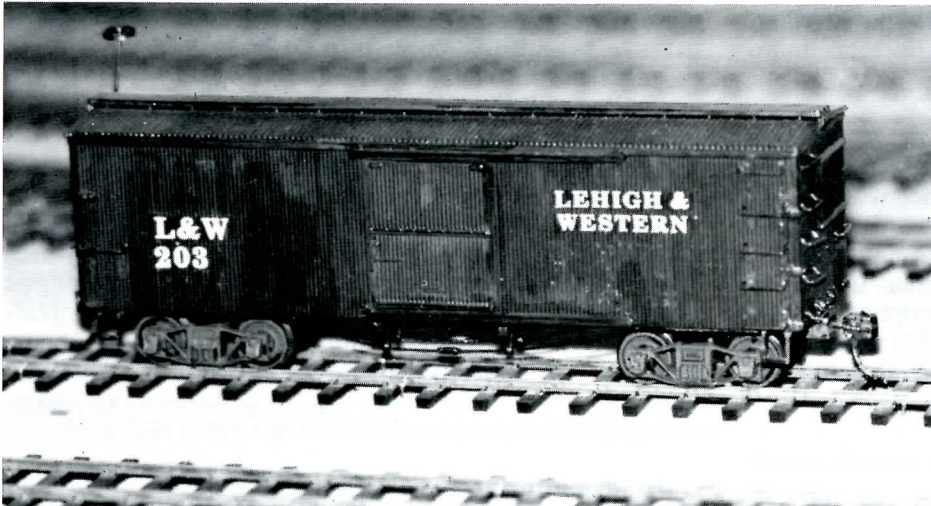


The 'S'traight & Narrow

From David L. Heine

News and Reviews on the Narrow Gauge Front

Narrow Gauge Rolling Stock from HO (and other) Scales



This boxcar was converted from an MDC "Old Timer" HO boxcar with S brakewheel and grabirons. Trucks are MDC HO regauged.



This stock car was converted from an MDC (HO) Old timer stock car. New S brakewheel, etc. Trucks are regauged MDC archbar - 4' wheelbase in S.



Athearn HO rib-side two-bay hopper provided the basis of this conversion. Trucks are MDC HO archbar regauged.

Photos by David Heine

One of the advantages of modeling in S narrow gauge is that we have some excellent rolling stock kits available, especially if one models the Denver & Rio Grande Western, Rio Grande Southern, and Colorado & Southern in their later days. However, besides using standard Sn3 kits, we can also utilize some kits from HO and other scales. In this column, I will cover some of these, many of which I have done myself.

Why use an HO car for a Sn3 model, in the first place? There are several reasons. The first is that an HO car can be a starting point for a model of a car that is not available as an Sn3 kit. This would generally be one of the older, smaller cars. The second is to obtain some fast, relatively easy to build rolling stock of a free-lance, but believable design. The third is a way to obtain some relatively low cost rolling stock. Here are some of the possibilities that I have come up with:

Model Die Casting "Old Timer"

Boxcar (3060) - This HO car scales to 27' long, 6'8" wide, and 9' high (rails to roofwalk) in S. It can be used to model several cars in the 24' to 27' range. It is close to some of the 10 and 20 ton cars used by several narrow gauge railroads. For example, the Denver & Rio Grande had some boxcars that were 27'6" long by 7'6" wide. They also had about 2505 10 ton cars that were 24' long and 7'5" wide at one time. The Denver, South Park, & Pacific had some boxcars that were 26' 1-1/2" long and 7' 1-1/2" wide. They also had some that were 27'3" long and 7'7" wide.

The MDC boxcar is not too narrow for all cars. The Cario & Kanawha in West Virginia had one boxcar that lasted to the end that was 22' 1-1/2" long and only 6'7-1/2" wide. I would think that other railroads had similar sized cars in the earlier years of narrow gauge railroads.

This car can also be used for Sn2 boxcar. In this case the car "as is"

would generally be too wide. The Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes boxcars were 5'6" to 5'10" wide. However, the Bridgton & Saco River "short" boxcars were 26' long and 6'6" wide, again very close to the MDC car.

The boxcar could be widened using some Evergreen scribed siding, if desired. S scale details, such as grab irons, brakewheels, turnbuckles, etc. need to be added. I replace the thread supplied for truss rods with 20 lb. test nylon fishing line, and add turnbuckles which are not included in the HO kit. However, some earlier cars did not have turnbuckles in their truss rods. This kit also comes with two ladders per car that are perfect for S scale. Some of the prototype cars had ladders instead of grab irons, so the ones provided can be used, or Grandt Line ladders can be used, as preferred.

Since my road is free-lance, I used some of these boxcars "as-is", with S details. They look like smaller, older cars next to my kit-built 30' boxcars. Another possibility is to modify some of these cars into work train service cars.

Model Die Casting "Old Timer" Reefer (3160) - This car is similar in size to the boxcars. The "Tiffany" reefers that the DSP&P had were 27' long and 7'6" wide, so they are close.

Model Die Casting "Old Timer" Stockcar (3260) - This car is again similar in size to the boxcars. The D&RG had some early stock cars that were 27'6" and 24' long and 7'8" wide. These cars do make up into a nice "free-lance" stock cars with only S scale details.

Athearn Two-Bay Hopper Cars - The ribbed side version of these cars are close to some of the early East Broad Top steel hopper cars, and actually fall in between the two sizes that these came in. The Athearn car scales out to be 2" too wide, 3" too low, and either 2'3" too long, or 1'6" too short. The number of panels on the side is correct although the slope sheets are not exactly correct. In my free-lance case they are perfect for hauling coal from the mine to the breaker. Again, all they need is S scale details. Although unprototypical, I also have a string of the composite side version, just because I like the way they look.

Model Die Casting Three-Bay Ribbed

Side Hopper Cars (1485) - These are close to the East Broad Top's three-bay hoppers. The MDC car is 2' too long and 3" too narrow. "As-is" it has one panel too many and the slope sheets are also wrong, but, it is close enough for me, with the change to S scale details.

Tichy Wood Ore Cars (4012) - These make up into nice little wooden ore cars. All you need to do is regauge the wheels and replace the brakewheel with an S scale casting. You don't need to even change the grab irons on these cars.

Grandt Line Large Gilpin Tram Ore Cars (3050) - This is a simple On2 kit that makes up into a nice Sn3 metal ore car. All you need to change on this one is the brakewheels and add Sn3 trucks. This low cost kit does not include trucks.

Grandt Line Small Gilpin Tram Ore Cars (3018) - This is an On2 kit that makes up into a nice Sn2 metal ore car.

Yes, this is correct, these cars are small. Again, replace the brakewheels with S scale ones. In my case I added HO_{N3} trucks, since that is what I use for Sn₂ (actually Sn₂₆"), and the kit does not include any trucks.

These cars will not be for the "rivet counters" among us, but for those of us without enough time to consider scratchbuilding, they do serve their purposes. They are fine for someone who wants something different than what is available from the kits, or wants to obtain some cars quickly for a layout, or just wants a low cost way to get his feet wet in S narrow gauge.

As always, please feel free to send any comments to myself or Jeff.

Contributions or Comments:

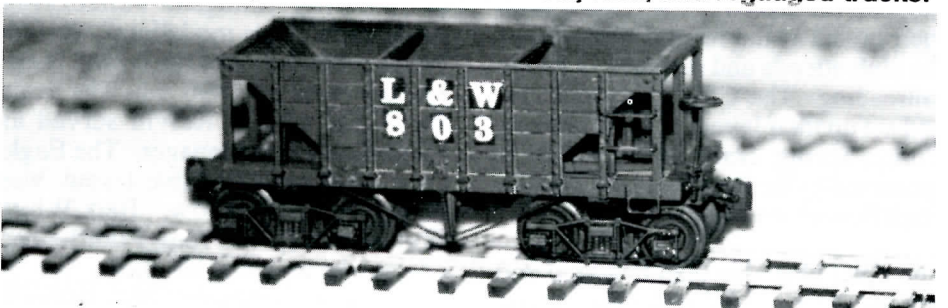
David L. Heine, 5758 Bel Air Dr.,
Coopersburg, PA 18036
E-mail: a322@lehigh.edu



Converted from Athearn HO composite side 2-bay hopper.



Above - Ore car made from Grandt Line large Gilpin Tram On2 kit. Below - Ore car is from Tichy HO kit. New brakewheel, KDs, and regauged trucks.



THE CLUB SANDWICH

By Dave Pool

The *Bristoliner*, newsletter for the **Bristol S-Gauge Railroaders (BSGR)**, states that this is the oldest S-gauge club still in existence. This is according to editor Doug Peck. And note that since the club began in 1947, this is their 50th anniversary year.

The **BSGR** attended and set up their portable layout at the 1997 Railroad Hobby Show at the Eastern States Exposition Grounds, West Springfield, MA., on Feb. 1 and 2. This is probably the largest model railroad show east of the Mississippi, with all due respects to the Greenberg and GATS organizations. The two day show draws thousands of railroad and model railroad enthusiasts from all areas. S Helper Service, Port Lines Hobby Supplies, Del-Aire Products, J & E Train Depot, and other S gauge sympathetic dealers were present at this year's show to help promote the gauge. NASG's Eastern Vice President John Foley was present to promote the organization at the show.

The **BSGR** were present to operate various types of equipment and offer information to show attendees about our favorite model railroading gauge. They have an Amtrak F-40 PH locomotive and cars which they use to show off their layout and demonstrate operational possibilities in S gauge.

The **Connecticut S Gaugers (CSG)** held their first meeting of the new year at the home of Bill Krause in January. Bill's Lester Central S gauge railroad was used for scale operations at the meeting. This layout is modular and conforms in every detail to the NASG modular standards. Some of the modules have Code 125 rail with low headed spikes to allow the operation of AF flanges and hi-rail trains. These modules are used when the club sets up their layout at the several train shows the club attends and displays S gauge railroading. The **CSG** plans to attend and set up their layout at the Cheshire, Conn., Spring Train Show, which is sponsored by the Ram Band of Cheshire High School, on March 9.

The **CSG** club also plan to attend and set up their modular layout at the

Housatonic Model Railway Club Train Show, in Fairfield, CT. This show will be held at the Tomlinson Middle School on Sunday, April 6. **CSG** member Bruce Carter is also a member of the Housatonic group, which has a large HO (cough,cough) layout in the basement of the local library.

The Eli Whitney Museum in Hamden, CT. had a large display layout using Gargraves trackage and AF trains operating in honor of the recent anniversary of the A. C. Gilbert Company. The display was billed as "Flyer at Fifty", and included a large custom model (in 3/16 ths scale) of the A.C. Gilbert factory in New Haven, CT. The factory model was designed and constructed under the guidance of Howard Hebel, A.I.A. and architect from New Haven.

The display included several S gauge tracks which could operate up to four trains at the same time. The trains were controlled by large rotating arm throttles mounted in a console situated at one end of the 9 by 25 foot layout. Visitors (old and young together) sat at the controls and operated the trains in a complete hands-on manner. S Helper Service contributed several pieces of rolling stock to operate on the layout. **CSG** member Craig O'Connell lives in the area of the museum and helped publicize the display to the members of the club. The display was written up in the New York Times Sunday edition with several photos of the S gauge trains operating on the layout. William Brown is director of the Eli Whitney Museum.

From across the Atlantic Ocean comes the newsletter of the **American S Scale Circle (ASSC)** self-described as ..."an occasional newsletter of rambling thoughts concerning American S Scale modelling". Kelvin White is the author of the recent issue. The big event of 1996 was The Scale Show, for which Kelvin served as Exhibition Floor Manager. The Eagle Lake, an S scale portable layout, was displayed at the show. Bert White (Kelvin's dad), and John Prior helped operate the layout at the show.

The **ASSC** had visitors from the U.S. in the form of David & Sharon Jasper from Bloomington, MN. who organized their UK holiday to take in the Scale Show exhibit. The latest newsletter from the **ASSC** has a photo of several members at the show along with guests from the U.S. Included were John Prior, Dave Jasper (guest), Peter Baldamus (guest), Bert White, and Kelvin White. The newsletter includes a good rundown of currently available S gauge models and their sources. Trolleys seem to be of interest to our compatriots in the UK who are modelling in 3/16 ths scale. Included in their newsletter is a section entitled: *Build it Yourself* This is described to include kitbashing and scratchbuilding, and there is a discussion on the use of HO diesel loco trucks for interurban cars. Your column editor purchased O gauge light duty interurban side frames for use in fabricating S gauge passenger trucks.

The *Canadian S Scale Quarterly*, *Issue 21*, was edited by Jim Martin, and he included a diagram of a portable layout built by members Oliver and David Clubine, Clayton Peter, Larry Neal and himself along with support from Scott Campbell of Niagara Falls. The layout includes a staging yard (three tracks), interchange wye, passing siding, and several industry sidings in a space of 9 x 20 ft. The layout features only commercially available structures and rolling stock to show what is available in S scale today. It was set up at the Brantford show and received a favorable reception. The *Quarterly* is the newsletter of the **Canadian S gaugers**, who call themselves **S Canada**.

The editor of issue No. 22 was Joe Pereira, and he had an article in the December, 1996, issue of *Classic Toy Trains* magazine titled *Finding Flyer Trains in Canada*. Issue No. 22 also includes a listing of Canada's best S gauge modellers or collectors and a good description of Joe himself who is a retired journalist, free-lance writer, and S scale hi-railer. He describes his point-to-point layout named the Central Canada Railway. On it he operates a mix of scale and hi-rail equipment. **S Canada** is an active group, and they include S gaugers from a wide area. They offer a 40-ft. Canadian National Refrigerator car and a 52 ft. Canadian Pacific flat car, both made up for them by suppliers in the U.S. Paul Raham coordinates the groups which make up **S Canada**. Manfred Lesser will edit

the March issue of the *Quarterly* and Dave Mehew the June issue.

The Call Board is the newsletter of **the Potomac Valley S Gaugers (PVSG)**, and it tells about the group holding a get-together at the home of Jim & Joan Bassett in College Park, Md., in January. The group were the guests of Robbie Carter of Herndon, Va., in February, and of Steve Thomas, of Falls Church, Va., in March. A recent issue of *The Call Board* included a public offering for the Easyville Shortline Railroad. This is a 4 x 8 ft. wooden layout with track, wiring, two saw horses, and a detachable shelf for the controls. The Easyville Shortline will be awarded to the first bidder who agrees to OPERATE the railroad, not simply store it. Members of the PVSC were solicited in the offering, which does not include electrical transformer, buildings, or rolling stock.

Jim Bassett has live steam as well as S scale interests, and the meeting at his house included a one-inch scale 0-4-0 operating on a test track in the basement. The PVSC displayed a modular layout at the Science Museum of Virginia in the Fall. Robbie Carter, Dick Cataldi, Ernie Stinson, Richard Lind, Bill Oertly and Tom Riddle were involved in the set up, operations and taking down the layout.

The Baltimore Area American Flyer Club (BAAFC) held a meeting at the home of Bill Grape, in January. A recent newsletter from the group includes a description on how to operate the AF action caboose on DC power for those modellers using AC power. The conversion offers smooth quiet operation of the caboose, according to the article. BAAFC member Lee Scott is marketing model trees to the general public. Items available are listed in the Product News Column of the February, 1997 issue of *Classic Toy Trains*. The group plans to participate in the Fall, 1997 at the GATS show in Upper Maryland.

Ted Larson, editor of the **Rochester Area S Gaugers (RASG)** newsletter reported that the group will be setting up and running their modules at the Blasdell Train Show, in Buffalo, N.Y. Mike Shay, Ray Abbott and Mike Holland coordinated participation in the show. Rick Israelson wants to build an engine terminal for the module set up. The RASG group is

planning club corner modules, which will incorporate closed frog switches to access a possible staging yard, engine terminal, branchline, industrial sidings, etc. In March, the group plans to attend the Strong Museum show

The Suncoast American Flyer Enthusiasts (SAFE) held their third annual Tot Train Show and Swap Meet in December. Show "CEO" was member Bill Greene. Lester Baynard brought his friend, Mr. Ben Moats, former merchandising director for the A.C. Gilbert Co. SAFE held meetings at members Chris Lucibello's in January, Evan Earle's in February, and are planning to meet at the home of Joe & Anna Spinella in March.

George Ricketts edits *The Lakeshore Special*, newsletter of the **Cuyahoga Valley S Gauge Assoc. (CVSGA)**. The newsletter reports that 1996 had been good for the club with new members joining, their modular layout being invited to the NASG National Convention in Detroit and the National Toy & Hobby Show in Chicago. Member Bill Hasnslick has made good progress on his layout, and the club sectional layout has made it through another year. Joe Jansky would like the club to build an AF layout. Chuck Fonda is the CVSGA president.

The State Line S Gaugers (SLSG) held a meeting at the home of Jim Larson in January. Member Nick Segalla wrote a pitch to the club members to supply information and articles for the newsletter, ably edited by Vera Geerts. Andy Geerts is the club treasurer and is now collecting or receiving dues for the new year. A recent newsletter included an informative article on George M. Pullman.

A recent newsletter of the **American Flyer S Gaugers of the St. Louis Area (AFSGSLA)** included a special Christmas poem by Rita Berk. The club met at Barry Dolan's home in February, and is planning to meet at David Steven's home in March. They planned to display their sectional layout at the Greenburg Train Show at the Collinsville, Ill., Convention Center.

Southeastern Michigan S Gaugers (SMSG) planned to hold a meeting at Tom Nimelli's house in February. Gary Chudzinski, a member from Ohio, is scheduled to host the group in March.

Gaylord Gill is president of the group.

The Badgerland S Gaugers (BSG) held a meeting in January at Roy Meissner's home. It wasn't too well attended because of a conflicting Packer playoff game. Dave Baule is planning to host the group in March. The new president of the group is Jim Brown. Member and *Dispatch* editor Jeff Madden gave an interesting slide show on kit bashing and converting models (to S Gauge, I hope). (*Yes, indeed*). Chuck Porter gave a slide show on his travels about the U.S.

John Eichmann of the **Rocky Mountain Hi-Railers (RMHR)** described the stripping and repainting of an AF loco for his grandson in their newsletter. The loco was one of his "mutts," not a collectable, and was restored to a new useful life by restoration.

Dale Weiler sent a newsletter from the **Inland Empire S Gaugers Assoc. (IESGA)** which reported the group held a holiday dinner at the Old Country Buffet in the Franklin Park Mall. The group is planning on attending the GATS train show in March at the Spokane Interstate Fairgrounds.

The Bass Waybill is the newsletter of the **Bay Area S Scalers (BASS)**. Lee Johnson coordinates the group. Don Harper hosted the meeting in January where his narrow gauge layout was operated.

Forward your club news to:

Dave Pool
11 Bittersweet Trail
Wilton, CT 06897

Sympathies Extended:

Some last minute, unfortunate news was received by the *Dispatch* regarding two members. Our sincere sympathies go to Stateline member Joe McGrath on the death of his oldest son, Brian on Dec. 24, and to Badgerland member John Wickland on the passing of his father on January 26. Those of you who weren't already aware of these tragedies, may want to send your personal condolences.

EXTRA BOARD

LITTLETOWN GAS STATION

Gary Ippolito inquires as to the heritage of the Littletown gas station on the cover of the October issue. Here's the scoop as far as I can determine it. Littletown, according to a Plasticville Illustrated price guide, was an upstart toy line produced in the early 50s by Unlimited Plastics, 200 Fifth Ave., New York, NY.

This guide shows several buildings in this line: a church, a barn, a station, a loading platform, a ranch house, a cape cod cottage, a colonial house, a school, a general store, a corner store, a supermarket and the gas station. There were also several accessories shown including light poles, trees, signs and farm figures. Production was listed for the years 1953 and 1954.

It appears obvious that Bachmann took over the line and reintroduced many of the Littletown items into the Plasticville line. These include the church, the loading platform, the cottage, the colonial house and the corner store. Maybe Bachmann still has the gas station dies?? Anybody help on this?

The gas station description is as follows: It was listed as No. 108/208. The structure is 7" long, 4" wide and 3" high - just right for S, only the pumps are too big. The No. 208 came with a bag of rubbery figures. The stations came in assorted colors. Variations: 1.) cream walls, dark green doors and roof, dark blue lettering, cream pumps. 2.) yellow walls, dark green doors and roof, yellow pumps, dark green lettering. 3.) yellow walls, red doors and roof, yellow pump, snap-in red plastic signs (instead of stamped). 4.) off-white walls, slightly transparent yellow front wall, red roof and doors, white pump. 5.) white walls, red roof and trim, blue heat stamped lettering, white pumps (this is the one I have).

-Jeff

HOW STANDARDS LIVE FOREVER

The United States railroad gauge (the distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England. The United States railroads were built by English expatriates.

Why did the English expatriates build them like that? Because the rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used. Why did "they" use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Okay! Why did the wagons use that odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagons would break on some of the old, long distance roads, because that was the common spacing of the ruts in the roads.

So who built these old rutted roads? The first long distance roads in Europe were built by Imperial Rome for the benefit of their legions. The roads have been used ever since. And what of the ruts? The initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagons, were first made by Roman war chariots. Since the chariots were made for or by the Imperial Roman Army, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

Thus, we have the answer to the original question: The United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specification for an Imperial Roman Army war chariot.

So, the next time you are handed a specification or standard and wonder what horse's rear end came up with it, you may be exactly right. The Imperial Roman chariots were made to be just wide enough to accommodate the backends of two war horses.

Therefore, standards live forever.
Provided by David A. Avedesian.

SOME "S" ANNIVERSARIES

1997 marks some important anniversaries in the S gauge world.

60 years ago: Ed Packard of C-D Models of Cleveland announces a line of S gauge models then called C-D Gauge.

50 years ago: The Bristol S Gauge Railroaders are supposedly the oldest S gauge club. One of the members of the original group was Bob Blois of Kinsman Scale Models. Maybe one of

their members could send the *Dispatch* a little history of the club?

35 years ago: Bernie Thomas becomes first NASG general director.

35 years ago: 2nd annual Northeast S Gaugers convention in Woburn, Mass. Frank Titman actually considers this the first S gauge convention.

35 years ago: Frank Titman takes over as editor of the *S Gauge Herald*.

35 years ago: First article by Don Heimburger was published in the *Herald* entitled "Diner Conversion."

35 years ago: In November, 1962, the first issue of the *S Gaugian* came out - a newsletter then.

35 years ago: In 1962 and 1963 the A.C. Gilbert Co. reintroduced the NYC diecast Hudson with smoke, choo-choo and Pull-Mor power. It sold for \$34.98.

20 years ago: Since we are on volume 20 (XX), I presume the *Dispatch* began 20 years ago. I hope to find out some more about the first year. If you can help??

S-WEST MEETS O-SCALE-WEST

Ah, my October editorial is prophetic. By the time you read this the regional S-West Convention will have piggybacked with the O-Scale-West Convention in San Mateo, California. According to the *Bass Waybill* of the Bay Area S Scalers, the S portion was on Feb. 7 and 8, the middle days of a 4-day meet. Registering for either meet allowed full access to the activities of both scales. Ed Loizeaux's layout was on a tour, and the Bass group had their modular layout on display. I'd hope we get a report of how the two scales mixed.
- Jeff

S IN NON-S PUBLICATIONS:

-November, '96 *Classic Toy Trains* - a Gilbert 50th anniversary photo spread and an article on Homer Henry's American Flyer layout called the Great Smoky Mountain Railway. The article shows how a professional model building crew constructed this layout.

-Dec. '97 *Classic Toy Trains* - See *Club Sandwich* in this issue.

-January, '97 *Classic Toy Trains* - Badgerlander John Heck had an article in this issue about maintaining and repairing the American Flyer milk car.

A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

On January 6th Jack Troxell's wife Margaret passed away unexpectedly. Our deepest sympathies extend to Jack and his family. According to Jack, Margaret encouraged Jack's S gauge

activities and attended many NASG conventions and S gauge activities with him. She was a member via a Family Membership. Jack has been an S gauger since 1946, and when they married 42 years ago, Jack was already an involved model railroader.

Margaret had attended many conventions starting with the 1972 NASG convention. She made many friends while attending S activities, and she and Jack would often be seen in the company of their two grandchildren, J'Anna, 11; and John the IV, 13. Now Jack has the sole responsibility for the youngsters. He'll have his hands full, and Margaret will be sorely missed by family and friends.

21ST ANNUAL FALL S FEST

The 50th Anniversary of American Flyer S Gauge was celebrated in November in Milwaukee at the 21st annual Fall S Fest. There were over 400 S gaugers registered and over 200 tables filled with S gauge goodies for sale or display. S gaugers came from 26 states and Canada to attend this annual midwest S gauge show which rotates annually between Milwaukee, Chicago, Beloit and St. Louis. Total attendance was estimated at over 600 with distant states such as Colorado, Texas, California, Kansas, Montana, Massachusetts, Florida and Connecticut represented.

Following the 50th anniversary theme Dave Garrigues, Gary Baloun, Andy Jugle, Bruce Haugh and Ray Fetzner filled 3 glass showcases and six tables with vintage 1946 American Flyer trains, accessories, catalogs and advertising. On public display for the first time since 1946 (50 yrs.) in the Gilbert Hall of Science in New York, were some truly rare trains including 3 1946 Northern's and 2 0-8-0 switchers. There was also a very early 1946 4-6-4 Hudson with an early smoke unit which filled from the front of the tender.

Other rare items included a #718 mail pick-up car and several freight and passenger cars with the unusual small scale size wheel flanges - again, all from 1946. Unique was Herman L. Trisch's personal ring-bound hand-made copy of the 1946 catalog. How about 11 orange Shell tank cars with 5 different variations.

Dave Garrigues and Gary Baloun gave a very interesting and informative talk

on the 1946 American Flyer Trains and about the problems that Gilbert encountered switching from O gauge to S gauge. Let's hope it won't be another 50 years before we can see this rare AF on display again!

John Wickland, Fall S Fest Chairman

S NEWS FROM ALTOONA

The Altoona Area Train Collectors Club (AATCC) elected two S gaugers to their top 2 offices. Gregg Miller is the new president and Hap McGunigal is the the V.P. Note that this club is a mixed gauge club, mostly O and S.

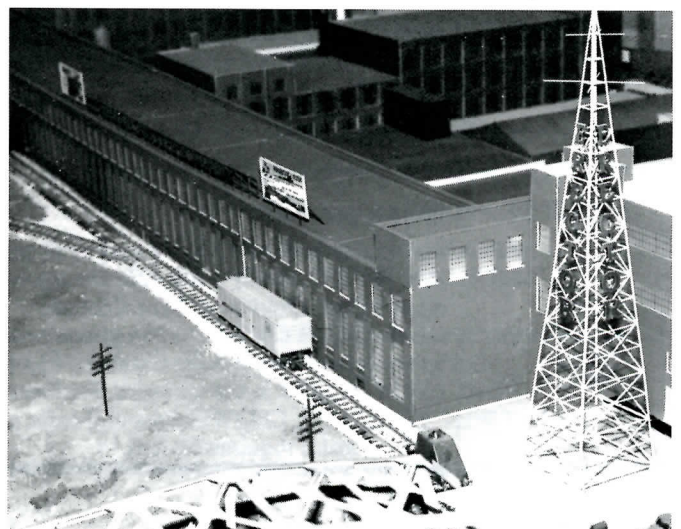
The Cambria & Indiana SW9 project has been scrapped due to lack of sufficient orders. This was announced previously in the *Dispatch*.

The AATCC "S" gauge modular layout was at the Bedford, Pa., train meet in September, the Altoona Train Meet in November and the Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum from November to January. Next stops will be the Valley View Nursing Home and the next Altoona Train Meet in April. This train meet will be at the Frankstown Armory from 9-2. If interested in the meet, call Gerry Edelblute (814) - 695-9691.

Please note that there is a new e-mail address for the *Dispatch*. It will be on the contents page from now on.
tlmadden@execpc.com

Eli Whitney Museum, Flyer At Fifty display. S gauge layout is a model of A.C. Gilbert factory, Erector Tower, etc. There was an operating layout with several accessories set up in conjunction.

Dave Pool Photo



S-CALENDAR

May 15-18, 1997: 10th Annual Spring S Spree. Holiday Inn, Richfield, Ohio (Cleveland area) sponsored by the Cuyahoga Valley S Gaugers. For registration packet contact: Gary Ippolito, 5311 New Haven Ct., Sheffield, OH 44054. (216) 934-9349. E-mail: gippolito@clev.frb.org

July 9-13, 1997: NASG National Convention in Westminster, Colorado (Denver area). The Denver Zephyr '97 convention will be held at the Denver Northglenn Holiday Inn, East 120th and I-25, on the north side. Registration forms will be inserted in the December *Dispatch*. For information contact Glenn Sponholtz, 4550 W. 90th Ave., Westminster, CO 80030. (303) 427-2976.

July 28-Aug. 2, 1997: NMRA National Convention, "The Lake Junction", Madison, WI. Contact Ross E. Pollock, Registrar, 3539 Mill Creek Road, Mineral Point, WI 53565. (608) 987-3396 or Toll free 888-525-3528.

Aug. 23, 1997: Gilbert property tour in New Haven, Connecticut area, followed by a picnic at A.C. Gilbert's Paradise Park. Info - contact John Vanacore (203) 239-1346.

July 9-12, 1998: NASG National Convention in Worcester, Mass.

Bids Open for NASG National Conventions -- 1999, 2000 and beyond. Contact Dave Held, Convention Chairman, 6939 Yorktown Ln., Utica, MI 49318. (810) 739-2932.

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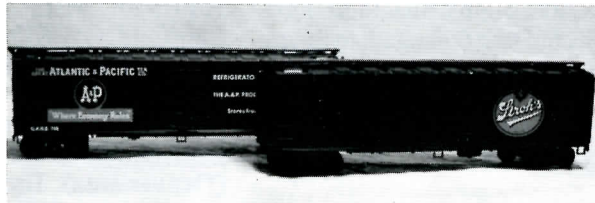
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Dispatch Editor	Jeff Madden 438 Bron Derw Ct., Wales, WI 53183 414-968-3729 Phone & Fax
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Promotions	Joel Lebovitz 1340 W. Greenleaf Ave., Apt. 1-N, Chicago, IL 60626 312-262-5668
Standards	Bob Sherwood 1621 Crook Ave., Cheyenne, WY 82001 307-638-8535 E-Mail: Softwoods@TCD.Net
Lionel/NASG Car Project	Doug Peck 6 Storeybrooke, Dr., Newburyport, MA 01950 508-465-8798
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