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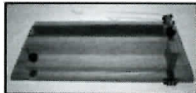
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Official Publication of the
National Association of S Gaugers

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

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Membership year is determined by the date you sign up guaranteeing 6 issues starting with the next issue after signup. All applications, renewals and membership questions should be directed to:

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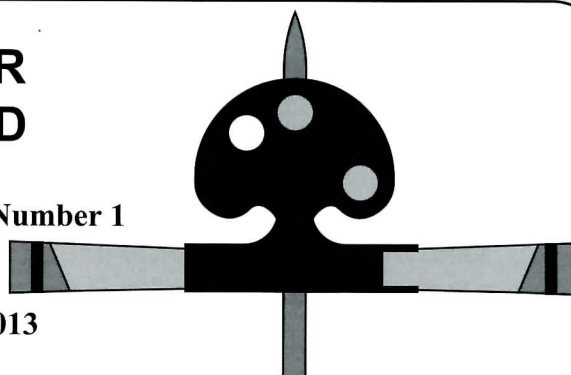
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COVER: Conrail SW9 8951 pulls loaded hoppers out of the Black Diamond Mine on Bert Mahr's S scale layout. **Bottom** - Plasticville bridge kit-bash by Edwin Kirstatter. See article this issue. And, the 2013 S Spree car being produced by American Models.

ORDER BOARD

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February 2013



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

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NASG NEWS

FROM THE BOT:

To be or not to be...

In late 2011, NASG had an individual, Peter Vanvliet, step forward and volunteer to re-invent the organization's web site. I think you'll agree the result and the web site's transformation has been amazing: lots of renewed interest, positive comments, new members and activity. We can pretty much all agree the revamped web site is a real bright spot for NASG. Wouldn't it be neat if we could come up with more bright spots like that?

But that is where the NASG has a problem. People like Peter are not stepping forward. No one wants to do the work of growing or even maintaining the organization except for a VERY few. These guys are listed in the "Dispatch" and on the NASG website (www.nasg.org). Many of them are getting tired, their personal situations are changing or they simply have run out of energy to do the work. These are volunteer roles; not meant to be "life time" appointments!

Right now we have one person shouldering the load of this year's convention. That means he can't equally perform his primary duty of being the Eastern Region VP to give time for his best work on the convention. NASG has had no solid external bids for any conventions since the 2011 convention in Sacramento. We have had a request out for almost two years for a replacement for Lee Johnson as the coordinator of the Perles Publication Award. So far zero response, not even questions about what the role does! We currently have a request out for a replacement for Claude Demers as membership chair (his regular job has become too demanding to handle his NASG job well), again with no response. Vic Cherven has also asked to be replaced as Secretary due to personal reasons, and while this search is continuing, again no one has even asked for information, let alone come forward. We have elections coming up with only a couple of nominees, certainly not a full slate or multiple choices for any given office. From my point of view, the American Flyer and Hiram side of the house has not put forth any significant leaders to implement new ideas in many years. The organizations membership recently stabilized around 1600 members; where are all of you people??

In the December *Dispatch*, a first-in-several-years membership survey was distributed. To date, over 200 surveys have been returned – thank you! It is gratifying that members have taken the time to fill out the surveys and share their thoughts and ideas. Many of the surveys have suggested great ideas and initiatives to move the organization forward – but the central theme has been: "somebody ELSE needs to do this..." On the question of improving the *Dispatch*, one survey respondent commented, "never make suggestions like this, you'll be asked to help..." The current NASG Board is all volunteers, many of whom have demanding day jobs. This has been the way it always has been for NASG, but in years past many new and different programs and initiatives have been accomplished. Unless new folks like Peter begin to step for-

ward, that progress will end.

In my two years with the Board of Trustees as Western Region VP, I see what appears to be an ever widening gap between the scale side and the American Flyer side of the group. Look folks, we will always be a minority scale, get over it... Every move to further divide, subdivide and separate us just dilutes our small collective voice in the hobby further. Our charter states that we are "United" and that we are to promote S in all its variations. This can only happen if we get input from all and everyone chooses to participate. That means writing articles for the "Dispatch", running for office and helping at the events where we can showcase S. I learned that getting involved can be a rewarding thing; you get the chance to meet new and interesting people in the hobby and you don't have to wait until someone taps you on the shoulder. Take your energy and ideas and GET INVOLVED. If you know someone who would make a great candidate for the Board or a motivating Committee Chairman, check with them to see whether or not they are willing to serve and nominate them. Ideas are wonderful things, but nothing will change until people with energy and passion for ideas come together and volunteer to make them happen. Sitting on your hands complaining about the Board or saying: "somebody else ought to...", will change nothing.

With the next cycle of new and returning Board officers there will be many new openings for committee personnel. Some committees, like membership, will be restricted by the need for persons with particular qualifications – in that particular case, computer database knowledge. But most committees will be open to anyone willing to volunteer and serve until there are too many "cooks in the kitchen" – wouldn't that be nice! These opportunities will be announced at the proper time, but please consider signing up. This is your organization, it will "be or not be" as you choose.- Bill Winans and Jim Kindraka

CONTEST UPDATES: The NASG Contest Committee has made the following changes to the contest rules. These rule are now in effect and will be used for the model contest at the 2013 NASG National Convention, Steamtown, Scranton, PA , August 7th-10th. While this change affects mostly the Flyer contest, I felt it important to let you know about the points change.

Section VII

E. American Flyer Imagineering: This tests the modeler's imagination and creativity. The model must be in the spirit of something that the A.C Gilbert Company might have built in the past or built if the company had continued in existence up to the present. Models must be in the form of a nearly complete prototype or a production model and not a crude mock-up. Use of original or reproduction Flyer parts is encouraged as the company always tried to incorporate existing parts into new production. Use of new technology is permitted as the company did embrace advances in technology. Models may include accessories, rolling stock and engines. Modelers should provide information as to how their model is a logical addition to the American Flyer product line. Entries in this event will be an open class. Models based on modifications to non American Flyer products are to be entered in the High rail category.

Continued on page 27

S RAIL MAIL

The Split in S: I rejoined the NASG about a year ago... I gather by your October 2012 editorial that nothing much has changed. We still seem to be flogging the same old dead horse. I'm not sure that, as a scale modeler, embracing the hobby of AF collecting is supposed to look like, but it ain't gonna happen. Now, before anyone gets excited or upset, let me offer some thoughts.

The issue seems to be supporting the manufacturers of S, although I also detect a feeling by some that they are being snubbed. The problem is not "S Gauguers Unite", but rather that we are in a dying hobby. As one of my S coleges stated, "How many of us still have a job".

It was AF that got me started in the hobby at the advanced age of 7 in 1951. Over the years my AF collection grew and I built several layouts. But, with today's proliferation of cheap toys that are broken in a week or two, if a child does get a train set, it is most likely designed more to discourage an interest in model trains. Furthermore, children today generally would rather play video games

Continued on page 26

S OS from... TOWER by Jeff Madden



More Ideas to Grow S

I've been stewing over some ideas of how the big players in S (MTH, AM, Lionel) might enhance the growth of S overall. As they say, yah never know!

1. Thomas the Tank stuff. A mass produced Thomas the Tank Engine in a small set with a circle of track and a few cars might help overall as most other scales have one.

2. Holiday Villages. Get into or sub contract some holiday village pieces in resin or styrene that could be used as add-ons to beginner sets like the Thomas one mentioned above. Many of the current villages - mostly for Christmas or Halloween) are close to S anyway. I'd suggest these at least be made to a modest level of detail (snow should be an add-on) so they could be adapted by those wanting to utilize the actual building on a layout. These could easily be accompanied by 1/64 vehicles and figure sets.

3. Besides Thomas, starter sets from the three manufacturers mentioned above, could include a small 1900 type ten-wheeler plus some passenger cars and freight cars. These should be of good enough quality and detail to appeal to the regular S operators as well as the beginner just wanting a set for the holidays. The trains could come in holiday decorated versions as well as prototype schemes. Yes, some cars could be gimmicky with operating skeletons or reindeer popping out of freight car doors.

4. Here's the chance to produce a budget priced, yet detailed, operating trolley car as well. Such a car would have the holiday market, but should also appeal to the modeler.

Just imagine a Thomas the Tank S scale locomotive starter set or a 1910 era streetcar, or just a neat steam engine and a few cars circling a holiday village.

To me, these novelty S train sets would be an additional way for the larger train manufacturers to possibly develop a large enough market that could eventually expand, or at least subsidize, the S lines for the regular operator and modeler.

True, a Thomas the Tank set would only be purchased by model railroaders to please the grandkids and youngsters at home or at a show, but the other gimmicky train sets could also be utilized by the modeler if the detail was good enough.

I can see it now - a haunted log train, a spooky freight train, a Polar Express passenger train, a Santa Claus freight train bringing presents, a Victorian Christmas trolley, a Mickey Mouse express, and Thomas of course. See, if grandpa picks up such a novelty set, and he picks an S one - well, mightn't we create a new S modeler out of the grandson of even grandpa?

Again, though, I'd hope overall quality would be such that the products produced could also be utilized by the serious modeler, or at least be easily modified. I'd hope for the quality of Bachmann's On30 line. As Johnny Burnette used to sing - "I'm Always Dreamin' ..."

As I read over Sam Powell's *S-Tracks* column in this issue, it occurred to me that this column is almost a companion piece. And yes, I know - Scale or Hi-Rail??



NEW PRODUCTS REPORT

By Jeff Madden

GAPMASTER (www.american-tieandtimber.com). I invented something I call the Gapmaster, which I am offering in several scales and gauges.

The idea behind the Gapmaster is that you solder down your rails and cut electrical gaps afterwards, resulting in a rigid assembly that cannot open up or close, and stays in perfect alignment forever. Some modelers also use these at module ends to prevent track damage, while others use in place of metal rail joiners.

I have attached pictures here of the GM015 for S Standard Gauge, the GM012 for Sn3, and a "3D Linecard" showing both. I'd like to get a one of these linecards and some samples to you for your evaluation and review. Please advise if this is something that you would be interested in evaluating and spreading the word. I really believe it is of great benefit to modelers.

Wayne Perrier

American Tie and Timber

www.american-tieandtimber.com

(408) 840-1533

LBR ENTERPRISES: The KIT for the AF tender operating RED MARKER lights is here. As these are hand made here at our shop for the time being please allow 14-21 days for delivery. To view/purchase please use the link below:

[http://www.lbrenterprisesllc.com/P
age09.html](http://www.lbrenterprisesllc.com/Page09.html)

[http://www.lbrenterprisesllc.com/P
age09.html](http://www.lbrenterprisesllc.com/Page09.html)>

- Dave, LBR Enterprises, llc

MODEL TECH STUDIOS (www.modeltechstudios.com) as seen at the Springfield, Mass., show has lots of details available in S. The 1-ton pillar cranes shown on page 7 sell for \$34.99 and the larger industrial crane with cab lists for

\$44.99. Many of the details on the website include roof skylights, ad signs, weathervanes, piping, roof ventilators, dust collectors, etc.

S HELPER SERVICE I am pleased to announce that Clay and Barb of "Dave's Twacks and Twains" have purchased our repair business and WILL be set to start selling parts and doing repairs on SHS trains. You can read their press release here:

[http://davestnt.com/_wsn/page3.ht
ml](http://davestnt.com/_wsn/page3.html)

- Don Thompson, S Helper Service Inc.

FROM PRESS RELEASE:

Raleigh, NC - Dave's Twacks & Twains has completed negotiations to purchase the parts inventory and shop tools from the former S Helper Service Repair Department of Cliffwood, New Jersey. The sale includes all of the remaining parts from the Cliffwood facility as well as the shop tools and fixtures. As Dave's Twacks & Twains assimilates its new inventory, the owners anticipate being ready with SHS parts, repair and customer service on March 1, 2013. The service will include repairs to all S Helper items along with DCC and sound installs.

"Barb and Clay have been providing quality services to S gaugers all over the world for years. We are happy that our repairs will continue in the hands of two of the finest customer service people we know," said Don Thompson.

Dave's Twacks and Twains was founded more than 25 years ago to promote and share the heritage of the A.C. Gilbert company with displays at train shows, senior residences and children's hospitals. During this time Dave's has become a reliable source of parts and repair in the traditions of A.C. Gilbert -

and now S Helper Service.

OZARK MINIATURES (www.ozarkminiatures.com) advertises CDS dry transfer lettering and various structure siding. Check out the site.

S SCALE LOCO & SUPPLY:

S Scale Locomotive & Supply (SSL&S) is pleased to announce a cooperative relationship with Lionel to provide scale conversion services for selected Lionel locomotives. The Y-3 2-8-8-2 articulated is the first locomotive being offered under this program. It is anticipated that other locomotives will follow if the Y-3 effort is successful. The Lionel Y-3 comes in the following factory-painted road names: Norfolk and Western, Pennsylvania, Santa Fe, Union Pacific, Virginian.

The SSL&S conversion services for the Lionel Y-3 include the following two items:

1. SCALE CONVERSION

-- All driver sets are disassembled and the AF tread/tire is cut off. The Lionel cast wheel center then has the AF flange machined off and is narrowed for new custom SSL&S tires. Using a special fixture, the precisely machined driver casting is carefully pressed into the new tire. The driver sets are then reassembled and quartered. The tender, pilot and trailing truck wheels are removed and replaced with scale wheels. All wheels are gauged to NMRA/NASG standards.

-- All 32 wheels have the NMRA/NASG RP-25 code 110 contour.

-- All driver treads/tires are flanged stainless steel custom made specifically for this engine.

-- Kadee S coupler installed on tender. Lionel scale dummy coupler remains on pilot.

-- No changes to the Lionel internal

electronics. Boiler not removed from chassis.

-- Allow 4-6 weeks for completion of conversion.

-- One year SSL&S warranty. Free repair for SSL&S wheel problems only.

-- Customer ships his locomotive to SSL&S. SSL&S does not sell Lionel products.

-- Note: Standard Lionel warranty is voided upon modification by anyone including SSL&S.

-- Cost: \$550 plus return shipping. Payment due upon completion of work.

-- Return shipping: Parcel Post=\$35, Priority Mail=\$55 (both include \$1,500 insurance)
-- Major credit cards accepted.

2. LIONEL/DCC CONVERSION

-- Conversion to Lionel/DCC is a software upgrade only.

-- No change to Lionel internal electronics.

-- Cost: \$75

For more information and questions, contact:

Fred Rouse

S SCALE LOCOMOTIVE & SUPPLY

6721 East Blue Heron Lane

Inverness, FL 34452

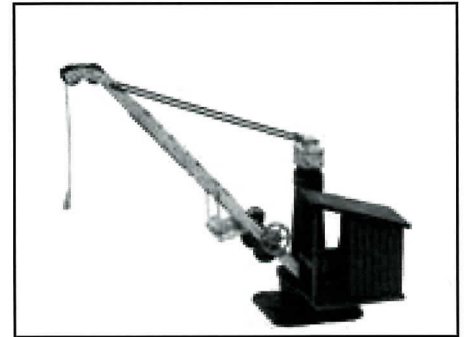
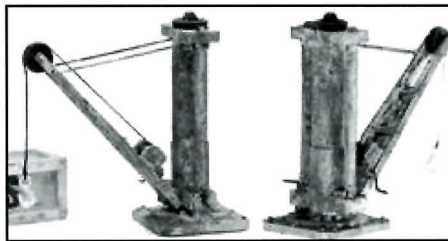
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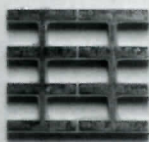
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WHAT'S NEW

AF Tender RED Marker Lights Kit

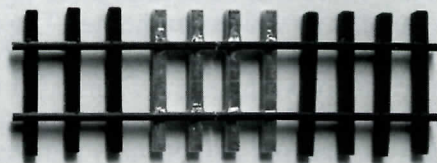


Sn3



GM012

Sn3 P-B-L or Handlaid 6'6" ties



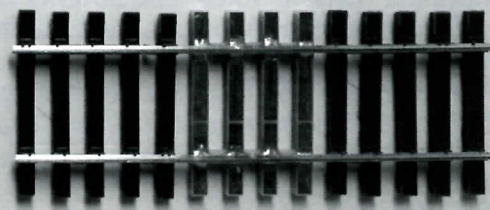
Example Sn3 Installation on P-B-L Flextrack

S



GM015

S Tomalco Flextrack or Handlaid



Example S Installation on Tomalco Flextrack

Eliminate Derailments

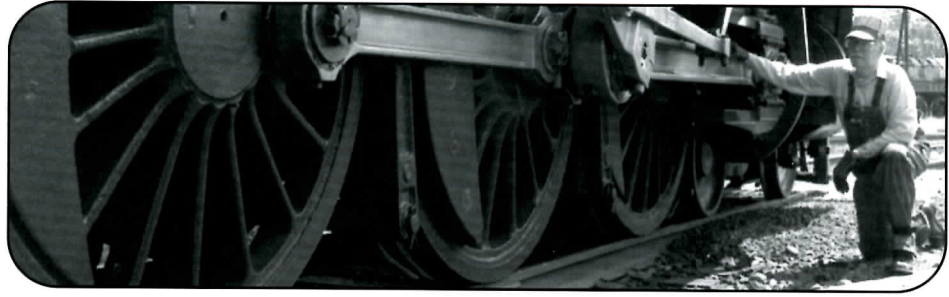
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NASG 2013 ANNUAL CONVENTION

SCRANTON, PA • August 7 - 10

The 2013 annual NASG convention is being held in Scranton, PA, the site of Steamtown, from August 7-10.

The 2013 NASG Convention will run from August 7th to August 10th in Scranton, PA. Scranton is, of course, the home of Steamtown. One of the finest railroad museums in the USA. The convention hotel is the Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel. Contact information for the hotel can be found on the NASG website. There will be layouts to visit on your way into town. Maps will be provided later. Wednesday night there will be an Icebreaker at the hotel. Thursday we are offering a tour of the coal region with a coal mine tour and train ride, plus stops at several other interesting sites. For those of you who were here in 2001, this tour is in a different coal mine (Pioneer Coal Mine in Ashland, PA) from the one we visited then.

Thursday evening we will have some clinics. Friday the vendor hall will be in full swing. There will also be a selection of clinics and operating layouts. The vendors, layouts and clinics will be open again Saturday morning. Saturday at 12:30 there will be a train ride to Moscow, PA. After the train ride we will hold the NASG membership meeting. Then cocktail hour, dinner, and the auction. There will be several more layouts open for visitors Sunday as you return home. The convention car will be an MTH reefer lettered for the NKP. Pikesville Models is also producing a Therm-Ice tank car in honor of the event. We have secured a beautiful coffee mug as a gift for the first 280 primary registrants.

The Official 2013 NASG convention hotel is the: Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel. The **hotel is the restored DL&W train station**. Book your reservations (see the website link for contact information). Be sure to ask for the "NASG rate", which are \$80 for Wednesday and Thursday nights (\$59 off regular rate), and \$120 for Friday and Saturday nights (\$49 off regular rate).

Scranton's History

In 1840 the Scranton brothers founded the Lackawanna Steel Company (which moved to Lackawanna, NY in 1901). This company started making rails for the Erie

Railroad in 1847. In 1851 the Scranton brothers founded the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad (DL&W). Scranton was incorporated in 1856 as a borough and in 1866 as a city. Due to the rich coal veins in and around the city, the area was also served by the Erie Railroad, the Central Railroad of New Jersey, and New York, Ontario and Western Railway (NYO&W). It became Pennsylvania's center of the anthracite coal industry. Passenger service ceased in 1952, and the trolleys stopped in 1954. The DL&W merged with the Erie Railroad in 1960 due to the drop in coal traffic.

Since the 1980s the city has been invigorated. The former DL&W train station has been restored into the Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel. Steamtown National Historic Site was created. This is a railroad museum and heritage railroad which occupies about 62 acres in downtown Scranton, which is where the DL&W yards used to be. It features a large, working turntable and a roundhouse which were built from the original DL&W facilities. The site is now owned by the National Park Service. The Scranton Iron Furnaces is a historic site (located next to Steamtown) which has the remains of four stone blast furnaces of the original Lackawanna Steel Company. The Electric City Trolley Museum is also located next to Steamtown and provides tours throughout the day.

The Dickson Manufacturing Company was based on Scranton, PA. Its significance? Well, it was a company started in 1856 by Thomas Dickson to manufacture boilers and steam engines. In 1901 it was one of eight companies that were merged into what became known as American Locomotive Company, a.k.a. Alco. The facility is still standing as part of the **Steamtown National Historic site**.

Another successful company, but not related to railroading, was the "Scranton Button Company" which was a major manufacturer of vinyl record albums from the 1920s until the end of the vinyl records period (bought out by Capital Records in 1946).

Today the Canadian Pacific runs freight trains (on the former DL&W track) in the area.

The **Anthracite Heritage Museum** is located in McDade Park in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The Museum tells the story of the people who came from Europe to work in the anthracite mining and textiles industries. On a tour of the facility visitors will experience the lives of proud people who endured harsh working conditions yet carved out communities filled with tradition. The diverse collection highlights life in the mines, mills and factories. Visitors are welcomed into the family's homes and neighborhoods with a moment of reflection in the kitchen, a visit to the pub, or a seat in a local Church. This is the mine tour that many experienced if they were at the 2001 convention - but if you missed it?

Layout Tours (tentative):

Some members of the Lehigh Valley S Gaugers will have their layouts open for Convention attendees either

In both photos, the convention headquarters Lackawanna Station Hotel is in view. The former D&LW station is now a Radisson Hotel. The top photo shows the west side of the hotel including the passenger car sheds, now used for parking. The bottom photo is a view of the hotel from the Steamtown yard with a trolley from an adjacent museum. Besides the usual steam trip, you can take a nice trolley ride through the Steamtown yard that even goes through a tunnel. The enclosed shopping mall is about 50 feet to the right of the top photo.

the Wednesday before the Convention and/or the Sunday after. Bill Fraley and Bert Mahr, members of that club, have already announced that their layouts are ready for visitors. Other probable standard gauge S layouts might include those of Roy Hoffman, Barry Mertz and Frank Titman. (Frank's Spiral Hill layout is even more tentative as Frank is up in years). Lee Rainey and Dave Heine have already announced that their scale (Sn3) layouts will be open. Bill Lane has announced that his S-scale layout will be open the Monday following the Convention. More details TBA.

Diners: There are several real "diners" in the Scranton area. They include Six East, Glider, Chick's, Terry's and several others. I'd recommend the Glider for sure from last time. Ed.



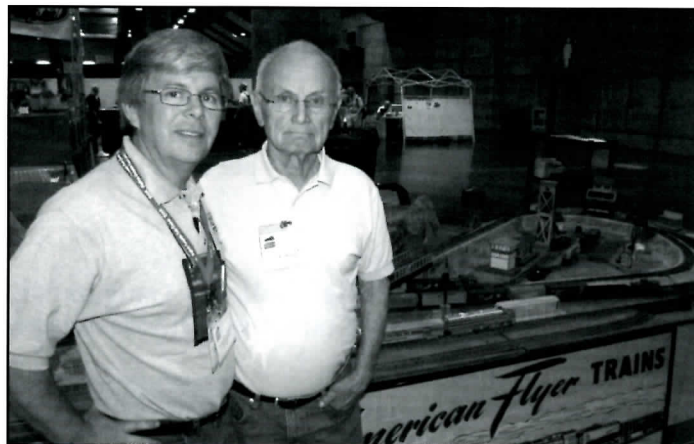
Last Run

Charlie Buckage

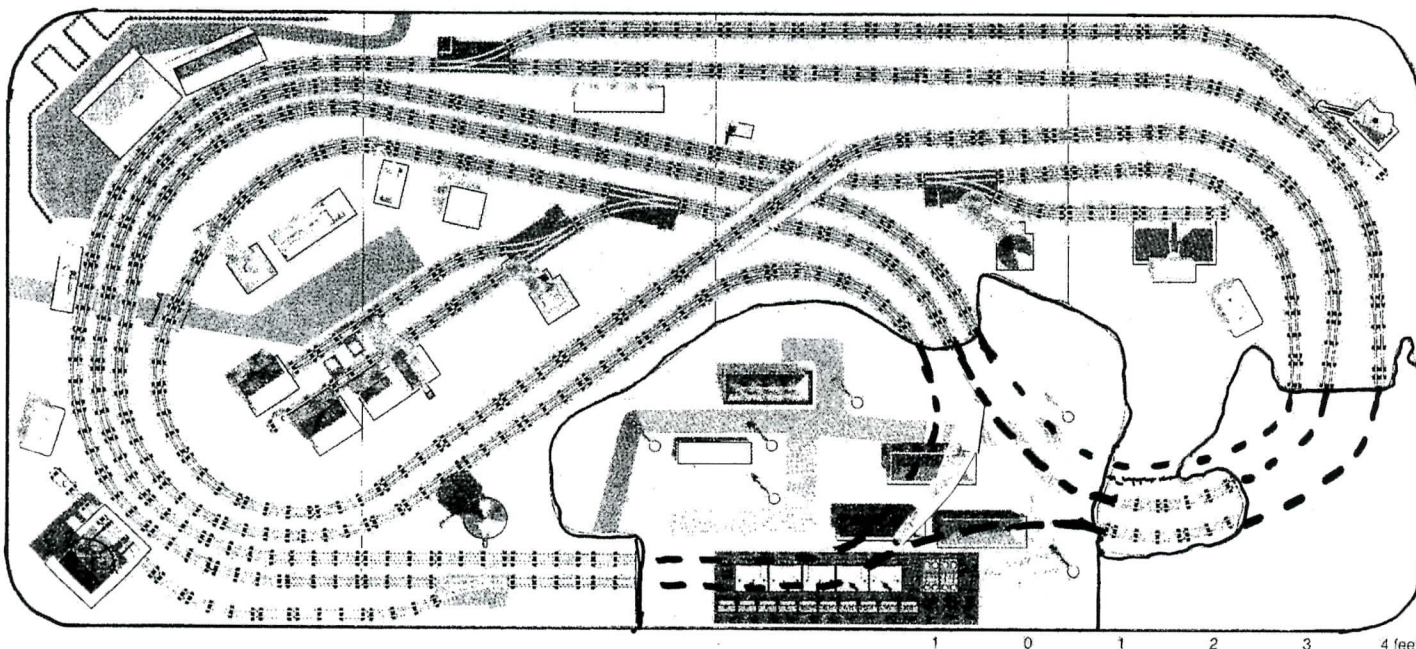
Courtesy of Doug Peck: If you haven't heard, Charlie Buckage died on Jan. 26, 2013. You may recall that Charlie and his son, Clay, purchased the original Sibley store layout, and have spent several years restoring it to its original condition. They have also transported it to York TCA, to NASG convention, to S-Fest, and even all the way to the NMRA National Train Show in Sacramento in 2011.

Charles R. Jr., 80, of Montvale, NJ, died Friday, January 25th peacefully at his home. He was retired from ABC Sports Broadcasting, where he worked for 30 years. He served as a Marine private first class, was a veteran of the Korean War, and was honorably discharged in January 1952. He was an avid model railroader. Beloved husband of the late Gloria Buckage (nee Craig) and devoted father of the late David C. Buckage. Surviving are his brother, Andrew; a son, Clayton and his companion Barbara Rudnicki; three

daughters, Terri Francesco and her husband Ray, Charley Anne Buckage, Danielle Foundopoulos and her husband Ted; seven grandchildren, Tisha Noakes, Amanda Ballew, William C. Lupinetti, Nicole and Thea Foundopoulos, Kristopher and Nicholas Ostrowski; three great-grandchildren, Olivia, Benjamin, and Wyatt. In lieu of flowers, contributions to Toys for Tots would be appreciated.



Charlie is to the right of son Clay as seen with the Sibley Department Store replica Flyer layout at the National Train Show in Sacramento, CA. Photo Jeff Madden



Here is the diagram of the approximately 7-1/2' x 20' replica American Flyer display layout that was at the Sibley Department Store in Rochester, NY. It's basically 3 loops - an over and under figure 8, a straight loop and a folded dogbone.



SHORT & EASY

by
Edwin C. Kirstatter

A Country Single Lane Bridge

This little bridge was converted from a HO Bachmann single track Over and Under set with a flashing light on top. But now it is an S scale steel truss country road bridge that measures 11' wide by 16' high and 48' long inside that could span a small creek out in the farm lands.

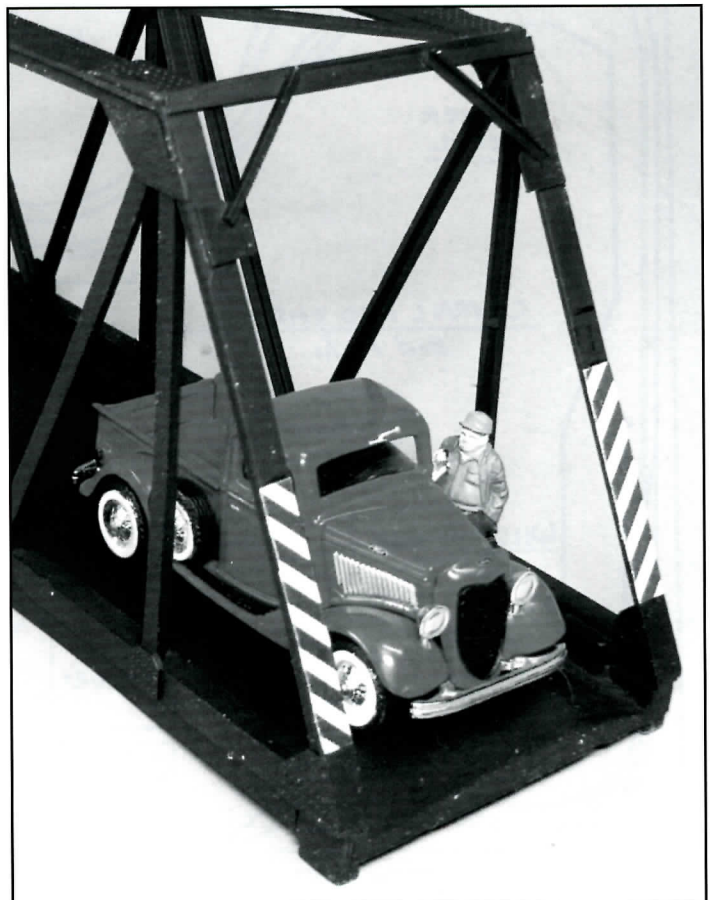
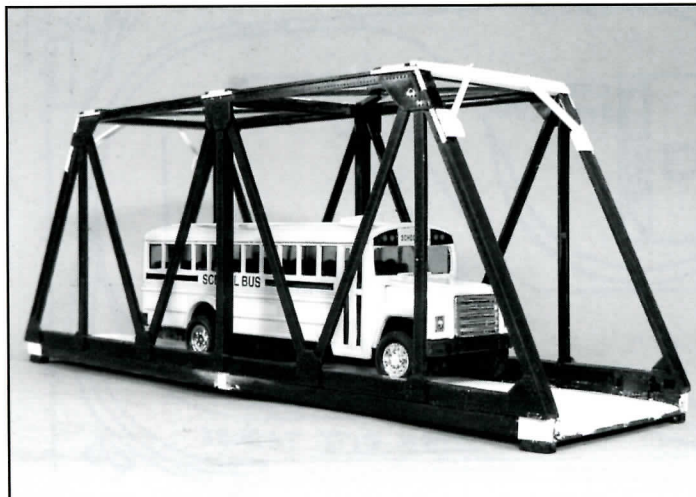
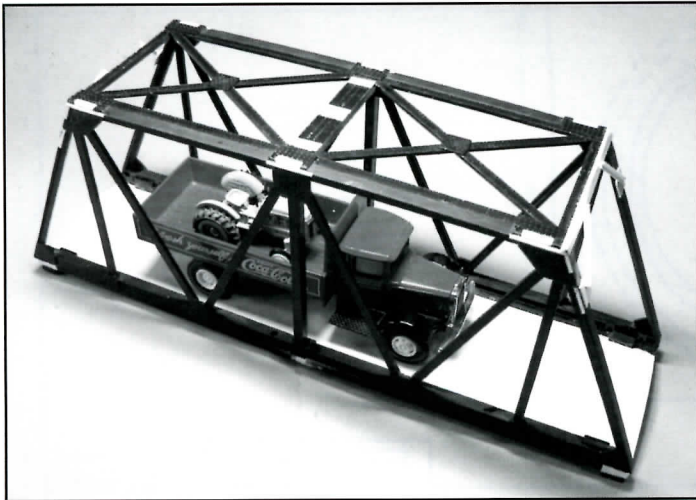
This Bachmann kit was supposed to be a snap together model but it didn't fit too well without some filing and fitting and removing plastic flash and mold part lines. After fitting I removed the flashing white light and its wiring to the track and pulled out the rails to get it ready to convert it to a single lane country bridge for S use. Then I cemented it together.

After the glue had dried I nipped off the overhanging snap over tabs and added Evergreen Scale Models 131 .030"x .030" strips that were missing at these places to make it look more like a bridge should look and covered the holes on top with .015" and .030" plastic pieces.

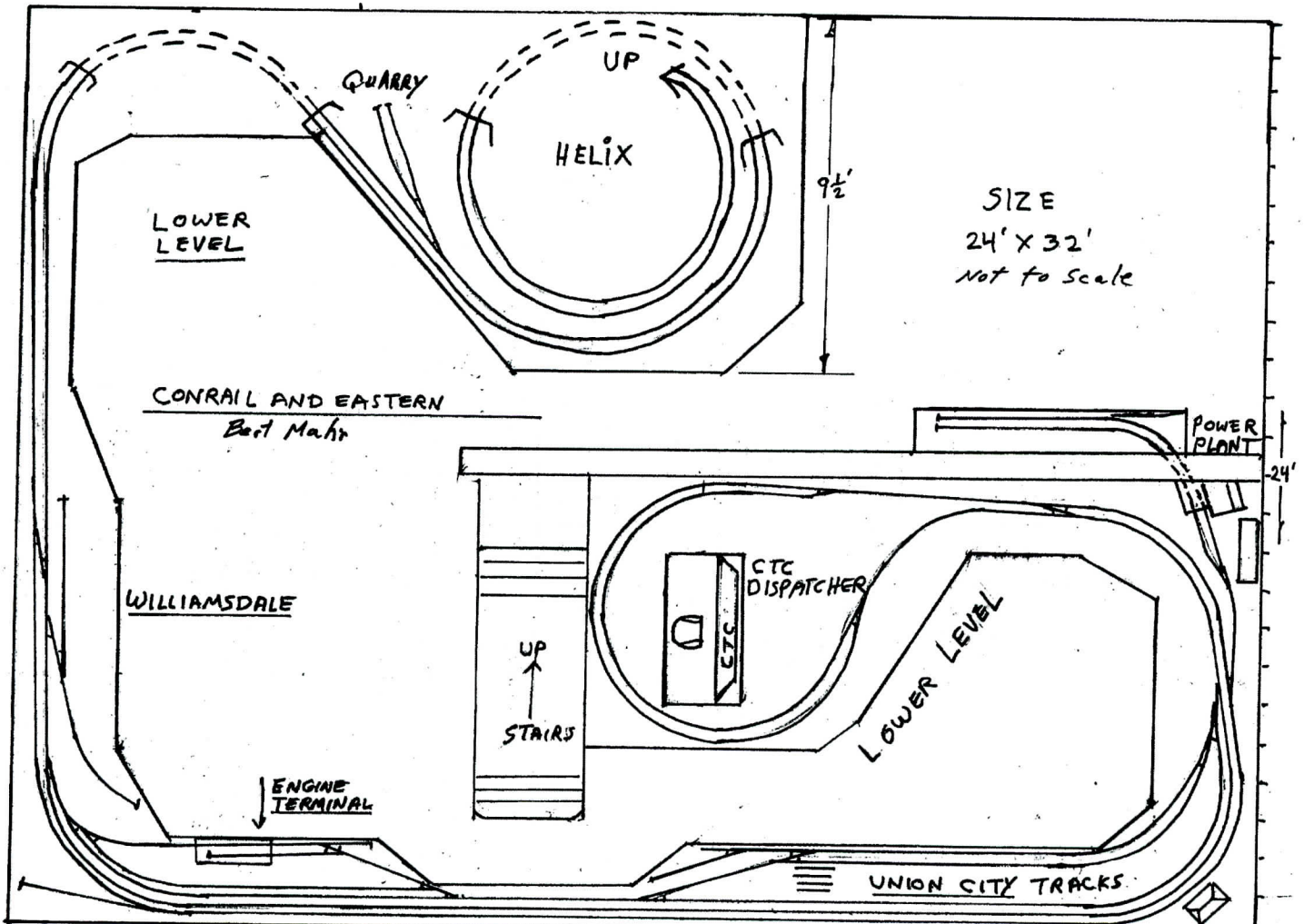
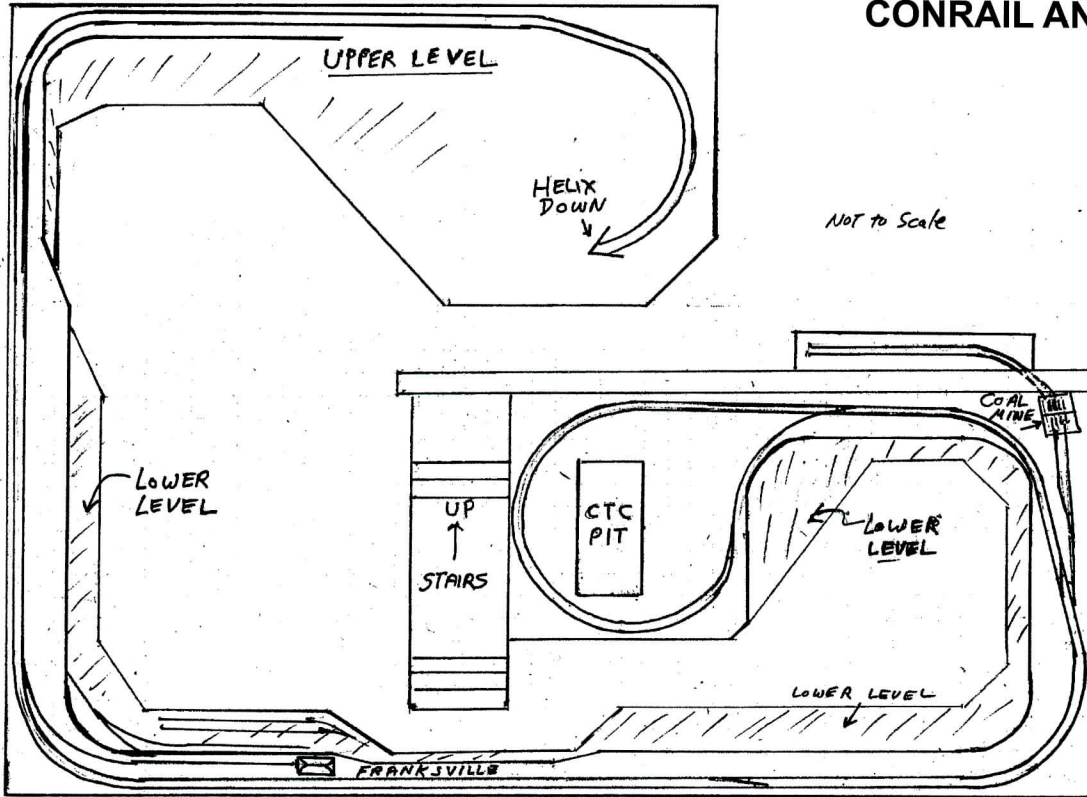
The end braces were missing from the kit I got so I fabricated them from plastic angles. Next I fitted some .020" plastic sheet stock inside to make the new black-top roadway. It was cemented along one side and when dry it was arched over to other side and cemented there giving a crowned road and good drainage to this short bridge. I puttied in under its ends and other places needing it.

Then it was spray painted a dull black all over to give a uniform black to the already black plastic. More details to add to this could be Grimy black paint and cracks in the roadway with shiny tar over them.

When paint was dry I added the diagonal stripes on the sloping ends. These were cut from business reply envelopes and cards at a 45 degree angle. Present day Chevrons are Black and a Yellow-orange color, to make them use a marking pen over these, but for my modeling era Black & White is just fine. I cemented on these pieces of paper with Aleene's Tacky glue.



CONRAIL AND EASTERN



Will be on tour at the Scranton Convention:

THE CONRAIL & EASTERN RAILROAD

by Bert Mahr

The **Conrail and Eastern Railroad** is the S gauge layout of Bert Mahr (myself). I live in eastern Pennsylvania and am a member of the Lehigh Valley "S" Gaugers club. Club member Jamie Bothwell is chairman of the NASG Scranton convention this year. The Conrail and Eastern will be one of the layouts open for visitors during the convention timeframe.

I am trying to depict the early days of Conrail when the variety of the paint schemes of the predecessor roads were still seen, including multiple road schemes on the same train. Because of this I have diesel locomotives painted in some of the predecessor paint schemes in addition to Conrail blue.

The layout is located in the basement of my home and measures 24 feet by 32 feet. The layout is a two level folded dogbone type. The return loop ends are stacked over each other and function as through staging yards. The two levels are connected by a helix, which is different from most helixes seen on layouts. The radius of the track changes between 48" and 45" and roughly only one third of the helix track is hidden in tunnels. Because of the variable radius, you can follow a train through most of the helix. The grade on the helix is about 2%.

Scenery is the basic method using screening, both chicken wire and aluminum window screening with plaster layered on top. Rock work is mostly from molds with some hand-carved rocks. The structures are mostly built from kits, including several Lehigh Valley Models. Some structures were kitbashed from HO kits, such as the blast furnace at the steel mill. The layout's scenery is over 95% complete. He is still finishing up some areas and adding more details.

The layout was designed and wired for DCC control. I use a Digitrax system with radio throttles and the reverse loops are controlled by auto reversers. I am currently working on a card system using Micro-Mark's cards. I am hoping to start formal operating sessions in the near future. I did have some test operating sessions already.

Of course, a layout of this size always requires the help of good friends. I have been very fortunate to have these friends - guys like Dave Heine, Fred Rouse, and Barry Mertz have all had a hand in the building of this pike.



Conrail 8922 (SHS) is seen shoving a boxcar of paper into Robert Printing in Williamsdale.



Conrail SW9 8951 works the east end of the Union City yard.



Conrail 8922 working in the Union City car repair shop area.



Fabricating plant in Williamsdale.



A view of the Union City engine terminal.

CONRAIL & EASTERN Continued



RDC commuter is pulling into the Carbondale station.



Conrail GE diesel gets orders handed up at RU tower.



Ex-Reading GP30 2181 pulls empty hoppers out of the Northern Light and Power power plant.



D&H GP35 and Reading Trainmaster await clearance in the staging yard. Note steel mill flats as part of the backdrop.

LONE STAR FLYER CLUB

by Bill Clark

History & Now

In the mid 1980's the Trinity Valley scale S Gauge club with about 8 members decided to invite American Flyer high railers to add a layout inside their scale layout. Four American Flyer collectors and operators put together an 8'x12' layout and did that with the scalers for almost two years.

In 1986 the American Flyer guys decided to separate from the Trinity Valley S Gauge club and form the Lone Star Flyer train club. The new layout modules were constructed and completed in 1987 and the Lone Star Flyer Club joins North Texas Council of Train Clubs to participate in its activities and shows.

The club adds new members over the next few years and in 1992 begins the construction of the 'yard' portion of the layout. The layout undergoes significant improvements over the years to improve track work, track power, mine scene addition, farm, town scenes, and more. At the current time the club is enjoying a whole new module we call the southwest scene depicting a train running in the 1800's in the American southwest..

The layout has been displayed at Grapevine Main Street Days, Mineola Iron Horse Fall Festival, The NASG (National Association of S Gaugers) sponsored it at the TCA National Convention in San Antonio. It has been at every Dallas and Fort Worth train show sponsored by the Council except this show, with the layout being on the tour.

The club believes our layout is the largest and best portable S Gauge American Flyer high rail layout in the southwest. The layout is 48'x10' in its current configuration. The club meets monthly to work on changes to the layout, operate trains, and enjoy the fellowship of other people who collect American Flyer trains. Our website is <http://lone-starflyer.org>. At the present time there are 24 members.

Please come and see us on the tour and bring your Flyer trains to operate. Our club room location is 116 West Pipeline, Hurst, Texas.



Ron Seibler running trains by coal yard.



Members pose by the AF terminal and passenger sheds on the Lone Star layout. Left to right are: Scott Young, Steve Curry, John Pauly and Sam Sekoral.

All photos by Fred Hight



Above - The Lone Star club poses with their layout at a show in Plano, TX. Left - Joe Bogart helps a little visitor blow the horn. Again, this demonstrates the points made by Sam Powell in his S Tracks column.

S LIM GAUGE OBSERVATIONS

NEWS & REVIEWS of the S NARROW GAUGE

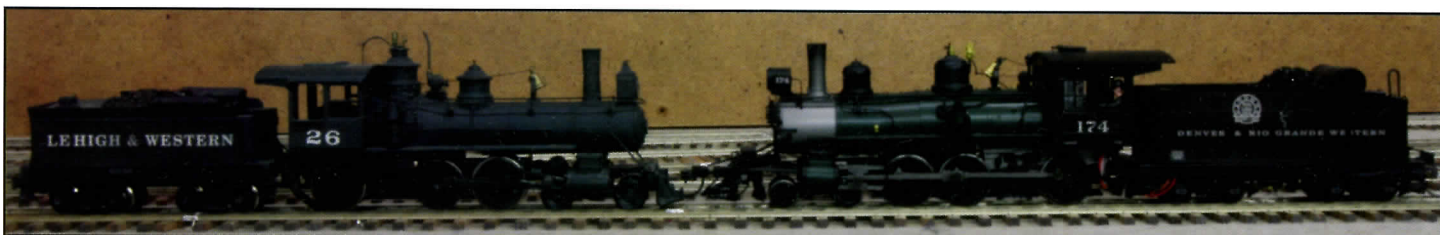
by David Heine

Below - L&W 101 is another early Village Depot kit of a C&S way car. L&W 102 is a model of another C&S car, but this time a old brass model by Overland. L&W 135 is more recent and was built from a PBL long caboose kit and has a complete interior. Building the interior was more work than what you can see without removing the roof sections.

Photos by Dave Heine



Two models of the same car, D&RGW combine/caboose 215, from different eras. The green one is an old PFM brass model (30+ years old) in the later green paint scheme. The red one is more recent PBL brass model in the red paint scheme and has a full interior. These cars are perfect for the end of a mixed train. I really don't need two models of the same car, but it is such an interesting car to me, and only one has the roof light on it.



L&W 26 started as a HO Mantua kit in my HO to Sn3 phase. I regauged the mechanism and installed a new can motor, etc. The boiler, cab and tender are stock, but all the detail castings were replaced with S scale ones. The HO kit was probably less expensive than all the brass castings! Leased D&RGW 174 is a PBL brass import; one of the first locos, in any scale, with a factory-equipped Tsunami sound decoder. They both have issues with too many wires between the tender and loco.



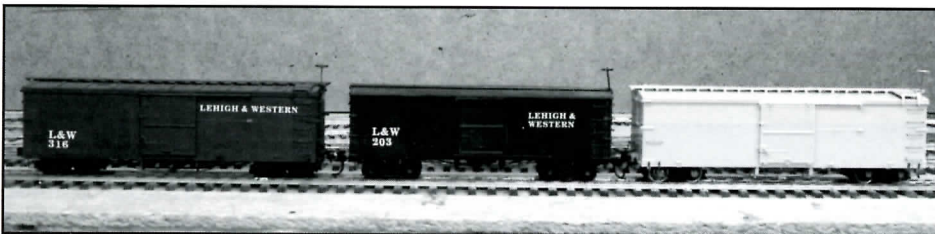
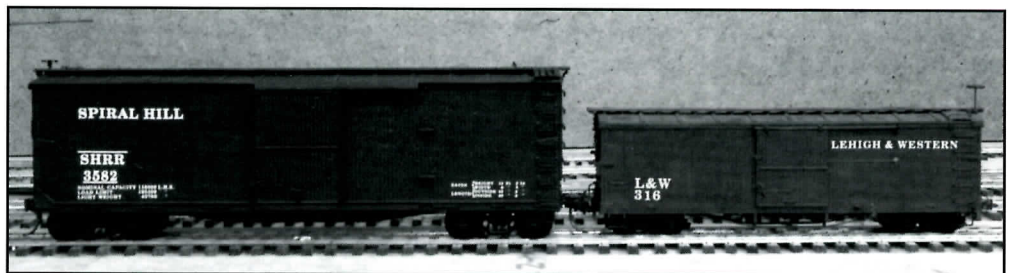
A caboose comparison on dual gauge track. D&RGW 04990 was a Berlyn pilot model I picked up at a swap meet. This is another older brass model. It is only lettered on one side, which was fine with me since I plan on redoing it for the L&W someday and the price was right. C&O 90913 is a brass model. I needed a standard gauge caboose, the price was right and it had wooden sides.

My Rolling Stock, a History of Sn3?

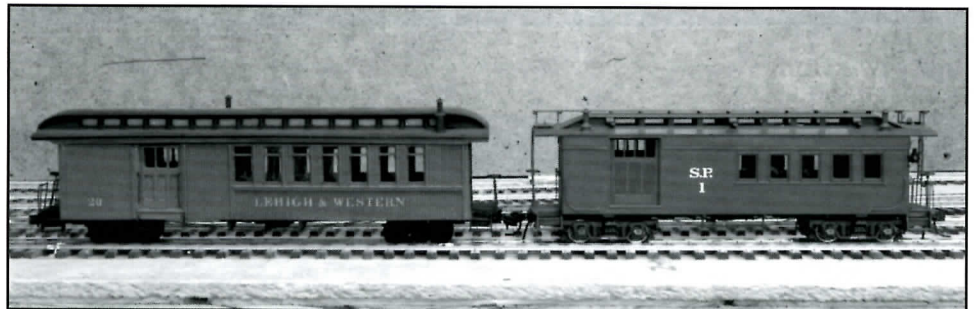
While working on my layout, I had to move some of my rolling stock around. Some of it had been out of easy sight and thus my memory was jogged about equipment I almost forgot I had. I have a hard time disposing of anything train related, so I have a sort of history of Sn3, or at least what I could afford at time, in my basement. I became first interested in narrow gauge and Sn3 in the 1970's, bought some Tomalco kits and put my name on the list for a C-16 #223. At that time there wasn't much available and I would try to buy one of any new Sn3 kit that came out from Tomalco and Rio Grande Models.



A contrast in gauges. SHRR 3582 is a SHS undecorated double-sheathed boxcar I lettered for the Spiral Hill (Frank Titman's railroad). L&W 316 is an old PBL kit. They are sitting on a dual-gauge track in my staging yard area. The common rail is to the rear at this location.



L&W 20 was built from an old Star Models resin kit. I need to upgrade the trucks; it still has regauged HO MDC trucks. At least they roll OK. SP 1 is a newer PBL brass model of a combine/caboose, again with an interior. Yes, that is the same SP that had the cab-forwards and Day-lights.

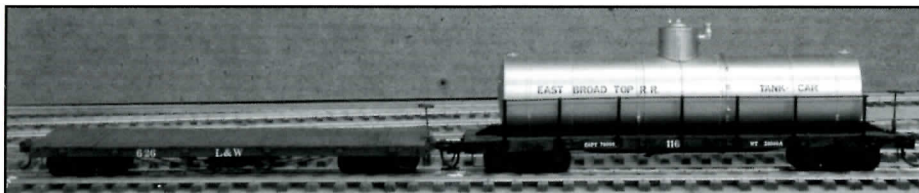


My motive power collection includes all facets of Sn3 models, old brass that needed work (and unfortunately in most cases still does), newer brass and hybrid models that came with DCC sound decoders, HO conversions, and kits such as those put out by RailMaster and BTS. Rolling stock is mostly kits lettered for my own railroads, but I do have some brass cars and some cars that started as HO and On2. A rather eclectic mix, but it does show multiple ways to model in Sn3.

Dave's narrow gauge empire (some std. gauge) will be open for viewing sometime during the upcoming convention in Scranton.

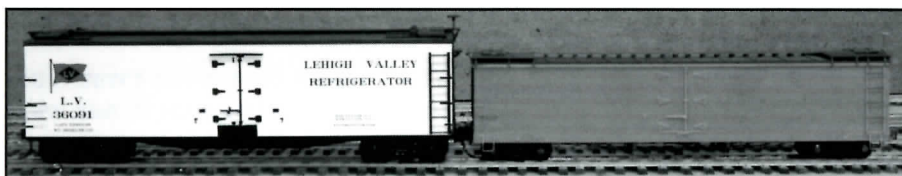
There was a time when I was looking at various HO cars to see what might work in a freelance mode. X11 is a Mantua old time rail and tie car. X12 is an HO roller type track cleaning car. A shortened MDC HO old-timer boxcar body happened to fit the frame. I added the S scale ladders and brake wheel. The roller is missing in this picture. X30 water car was built from some pieces from a MDC 3-in-1 kit plus some S scale details.

L&W 316 is an early PBL kit. L&W 203 started as an HO MDC old-timer boxcar. I changed the brake wheel, truss rods and turnbuckles, and grab irons. The unpainted car was built from a new PBL kit, the same injection moldings as their RTO (ready-to-operate) cars were built, but built by me instead of the factory.

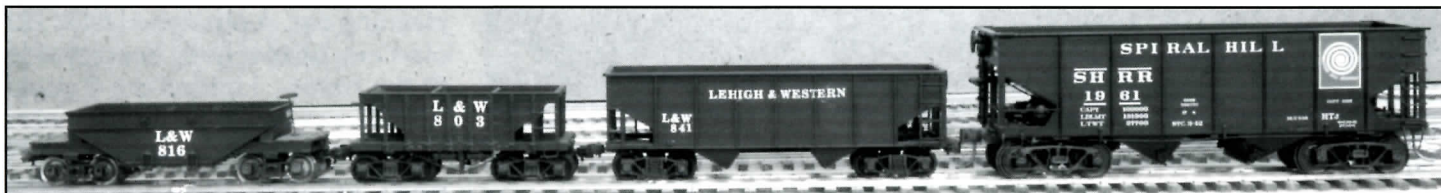


L&W 626 is the very first Sn3 car I built back when I was much younger in the 1970's. I couldn't get the brass Tomalco trucks to roll well, so it still has re-gauged HO MDC arch bar trucks. The tank on flat car is a BTS factory built model. BTS also made resin kits for the flat car itself, plus some other EBT cars.

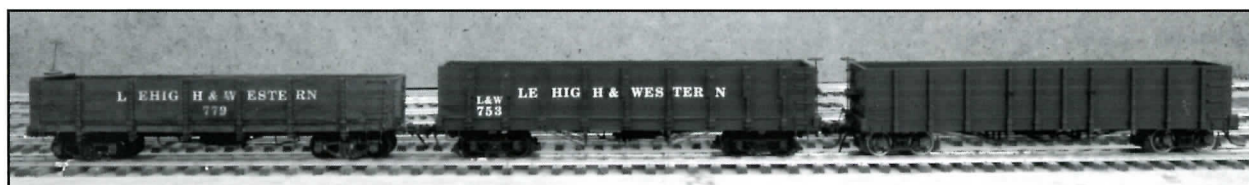
HEINE ROSTER *Continued*



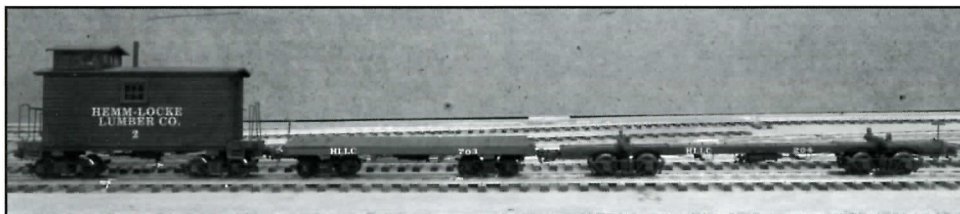
Two different 40' refrigerator cars on dual gauge track. LV 36091 is an SHS standard gauge car. The unpainted refrigerator was built from a PBL long refrigerator car kit. A 40' freight car seems long in 3' gauge.



A real mix of ore and hopper cars sitting on dual gauge track. L&W 816 started as a Grandt Line On2 large Gilpin ore car kit. It was modified with an S scale brake wheel and Grandt Line Sn3 trucks. L&W 803 started as a Tichy Train Group HO ore car. The Tichy HO trucks were regauged to Sn3. L&W 841 started as an Athearn HO hopper. It was modified with S scale ladders and rides on regauged HO MDC arch bar trucks. SHRR 1961 is an SHS hopper that was a Lehigh Valley S Gaugers club car project in honor of Frank Titman.



L&W 779 is one of my early cars. It was built from a Village Depot kit (styrene and metal castings) of a C&S car. L&W 753 is a Pecos River brass car. The unlettered car is a PBL RTO car. They did produce a few unlettered ones.



HLLCo caboose 2 is a RGM kit. 24' flatcar #703 was built from a BTS kit of a Westside Lumber Co. car with RGM white-metal WSLCo trucks. Skeleton car #204 was built from a PBL kit. The Hemm-Locke Lumber Co. was bought out by the Moyer Lumber Co., but relettering is far down on the to-do list.



L&W 945 was built from an old Berlyn kit of a C&S car. The Berlyn kits are now available from CVP. L&W 909 started as an HO MDC old-timer stock car. I didn't change much, just the brake wheel and staff, truss rods and turnbuckles. The trucks are regauged MDC HO

BRANCH LINES

News and Notes from S Gauge Clubs • By Dave Pool

Note: This column is abbreviated by your editor as Dave Pool has just been released from an extensive hospital stay. We wish him well, and he should be back on board next issue. - Ed.

Badgerland S Gaugers (BSG) had their annual Christmas meeting at the Merton Community Center where guest David Leiter had an interesting presentation on pickel cars and the pickel industry. Interestingly, it seems Michigan and Wisconsin to this day are the biggest pickel producers. The January meeting was also held at the Merton Community Center. The BSG will display two layouts at the upcoming Mad City NMRA show in Madison, WI on Feb. 16-17.

Connecticut S Gaugers (CSG) had their Feb. meeting at Bob Comstock's. Jack Swanberg, an authority on the New Haven, gave a presentation. On January 16th the club displayed their layout at a show held at the Trumbull Marriot. The 4 tracks of the layout ran almost flawlessly.

Cuyahoga Valley S Gaugers (CVSG) is preparing for the 2013 Spring S Spree to be held in Akron, Ohio on May 3-5. The host hotel is the Quaker Square in Akron - right next to the CSX mainline. Check out their website at www.quakersquare.com - phone: 330-253-5970. The hotel has a 12,000 square foot ballroom for a sale area available. An excursion on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad will be offered to attendees. There will be layout tours and other nearby optional attractions include the Football Hall of Fame. The registration form is available online at: www.cvsga.com or via the NASG website. Contact is Mike Graham, 216-398-9313 or mograham@hotmail.com. **The Spree car for this year is pictured on the cover - it's a Great Lakes Brewing Co. tank car coming from American Models.** Umm, is the beer included? Note: This is their Silver Anniversary Show.

Western New York S Scale Assoc. (WNYSSA). The January meeting was

held at Gregg Mummert's home. Paul Wachowicz, Bud Rindfleisch, and Dave MacDonald attended. The Christmas layout was operating and slow progress is being made on the "permanent" layout - tracks are operational, accessories being placed, and planning scenery.

Bud brought samples of the 2-dome tank cars he is kit-bashing for Lew Cabello. Paul ran his Miris Lumber "MOW" speeder and Flyer Rocket ALCOs on the layout. Gregg showed two M2 Ford trucks and a Greenlight ('70's?) NY State Police car he picked up recently, and some LED lighting strips from MicroMark. Thanks to Dan Malkiewicz for sending pictures of our 4x8 layout to the NASG "Dispatch." The pictures were included in the last edition and shows the layout in operation at one of the past TTOS shows.

Don Webster advised that the cast resin truck trailers arrived. If you ordered any, Don should be back from sunny Florida in March and

We displayed the 4x8 layout at the TTOS Show at the Leonard Post recently. Paul Wachowicz, Paul Gburek, Mike Barren, Chris Kroll, and Dan Malkiewicz assisted with the display. Some things seen running on the layout... an SHS Nickel Plate switcher, a Galloping Goose, an LTI PRR 2-8-8-2... Thanks for everyone's help at this show.

KND Enterprises is making Piedmont and Northern Boxcab Electric cast resin kits in S in addition to the LVT trolley and freight motor. Check out their website for details at - http://www.pknd.com/Car_Kits.html The boxcab is at the bottom of the page.

This was sent via email, but in case you missed it, Sunset 3rd Rail is thinking about producing an Erie "S" class Berkshire in S scale if there is enough interest. Anyone interested should contact Scott Mann at Sunset. Below is a link on the OGR forum that gives more info:

<http://ogrforum.ogaugerr.com/displayForumTopic/content/13115574285310457>

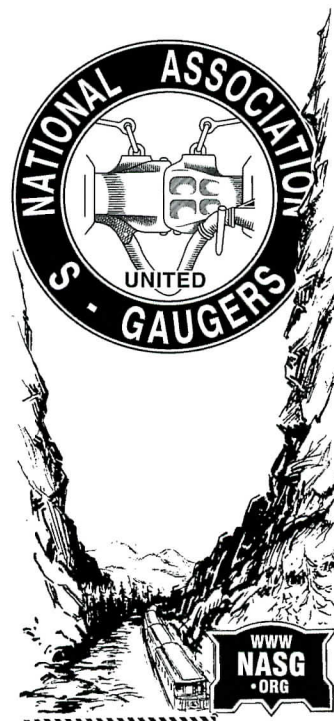
Our next meeting will be at Paul Wachowicz' home on Wednesday, February 20th, at 6 PM:

Rocky Mountain Hi-Railers (RMHR) have several events coming up in and around their Idaho home base. They have their big layout (Lookout Junction), but they also now have a smaller travel layout dubbed Lookout Junior for use at smaller shows and venues.

First up will be a display at Wally and JoAnne's church group, the Sages, at Southminster Presbyterian church in Boise. They'll have the Junior layout at this show on May 16.

On June 14-15 the **RMHR** will have the larger Lookout Junction layout set up for the Emmett Cherry Festival in Emmett, Idaho. Then on June 29-30 the Lookout Junction layout will also be displayed at the Treasure Valley Train Show sponsored by the 3rd Division of the Pacific Northwest Region of the NMRA. This show is at the Boise Hotel in Boise, Idaho.

Your club column editor wishes to thank those club members and clubs that submit information on the activities and events that you organize and attend. Please submit information and newsletters for the column to David Pool, 11 Bittersweet Trail, Wilton, CT., 06897-3902 or e-mail at: ndpool@juno.com.



IS MODEL RAILROADING A DYING HOBBY? What can I do about that?

This is a common topic these days in railroad magazine editorial columns. Maybe it has been done too many times already, but I could not resist tossing out my perspective. If you look around, it is pretty clear that there is a downward trend in the demographics of model railroading. This is not to denigrate the hobby. I love it deeply as you all know. It meets many, many personal, artistic, creative and social needs. It just does not seem to be appealing to kids these days.

The Age Factor

As a group we model railroaders are getting older. Kids are not playing with trains much these days. In fact we are heralding young model railroaders almost as loudly as we used to herald lady model railroaders. A cheer goes up from the crowd, and an article gets published when a youngster enters a model in a convention contest or builds a model railroad. This is of course a trend that does not portend well for the future of the hobby. There are other hobbies in similar straits, but we will focus on model railroading for now. If you think back to your youth, you will likely recall several friends in your neighborhood who had a tinplate train layout. We were the future of model railroading back then. At that time, trains were a part of an inner soul drive. We dreamed about trains and what we were going to buy or build next or what we were going to get for Christmas or our birthday. Visions of vast layouts like we saw in the department store windows danced in our wee little heads. We stayed up late dreaming about this while studying the catalogues that Flyer or Lionel published.

I do not have actual numbers in front of me, but I know very few kids with model trains in their basements. I have travelled from house to house for over 40 years tuning pianos professionally for clients. While I did not always ask if the kids had a train layout, I did often ask probing questions such as "What to you do for a hobby?", especially if I saw even a hint of train related stuff around. Very few kids I talked to were into trains. I would often ask to see their layout if they had one, and usually it was an HO layout with a circle of track and a minimum of scenery. You can tell just by looking if trains made a kid light up, indicating an inner, deep fire lit by trains. Most of them did not show that fire. The question is "Why does model railroading not appeal to kids these days?"

The Lack of Trains Out In the Real World

Not only are there not as many trains out in the real world these days, but I am going out on a limb and state that that they are not as interesting as they used to be. When we "mature" modelers were kids there were far

more trains roaming the rails, and more rails for them to roam on. When I can remember the steam trains that used to come past my house about a block from my home in southwest DC, I was about 5 years old. They were the transfer runs that moved on a regular basis from The Southern RR at Potomac yard to the B&O and Pennsy at Eckington yard in DC. We kids would run down to the tracks when we heard the trains coming and holler and scream and jump up and down and run around in circles because of the excitement generated by the steam engine with all of its noise, motion, and dirty smoke. Potomac Yard is gone. I think Eckington yard is there still, but with limited activity perhaps. I know the team track freight house has long since fallen down if some historical association did not save it. The steam engines are gone. That has been a good thing in many ways, and represents inevitable progress. But any motion on those tracks, which appear to be storage tracks for coal cars now, is not common, and does not attract the attention of anybody. The local neighborhood presence of trains is seriously diminished. That memory of seeing the steam engines is still vivid in my mind, and in part a driving force in my love of our hobby.

This presence of trains added to the love of trains for the kids in my neighborhood. Those trains were exciting. I can remember saying, "That engine looks just like my big brother's American Flyer engine". The real steam engine was a Pennsy steam switcher, or maybe a 2-8-0 with a high headlight and did indeed look much like my brother's Pennsy K-5. In the locales where the real trains did not die out, the people moved away from the railroads. When I was a kid my parents almost bought a house right near the B&O mainline in Hyattsville, Maryland. I was in heaven at that thought. But, we did not buy that house. My mom's explanation made no sense what-so-ever to me. She didn't want to be near that railroad tracks. We bought a house in the suburbs AWAY from the trains.

Reduced Railroad Payroll

When I was a kid I had relatives and neighbors who worked for the railroad. Railroad talk was a part of dinner table conversation. Like all good capitalistic companies, the railroads worked constantly to reduce the number of employees they had to pay. At this point I know a few folks who used to work for the railroads but none who do so now. Once again youngsters have considerably reduced exposure to the railroad industry. This spark to the imagination is simply not as present as it used to be. The fact that my Uncle worked as a conductor on the Missouri Pacific in Kansas, and that my wife's granddad worked on the NYC in Rome, NY contributed to my love of trains.

The Cost of the Hobby

I guess maybe it was expensive when I was a kid but it seems to me model railroading today is more expensive than it was back then. You could buy an entire train set for \$30 with an engine and 3 cars plus a circle of track

and a transformer. I guess today's starter sets are priced proportionally about the same as back then, but after the initial set is purchased today, the hobby seems much more focused on purchasing things rather than building. And the standard in the hobby now goes way beyond what it was. We want and need more and more "cool stuff" on our model railroads. Better buildings, more detailed track, more elaborate scenery. The hot new stuff is what one manufacturer (or importer) is calling "built-ups". These are buildings already assembled and which cost upwards of \$70 each. I seem to recall the Plasticville houses being a dollar or two each. The point is, I think today's kids look at what we call model railroading and simply do not have the resources to enter such a hobby.

As adults We Don't Play Anymore

When my 7 year-old granddaughter asks me to "play" with her, I have to confess, I do not know how to play. I only know how to build or fix things. I suspect I am not the only one my age who fits this profile. It is the profile of the modern, mature model railroader. I think we are so focused on the building of our complex rail empires that we don't know how to play anymore. We just take this thing a little too seriously as adults. Kids want to play. Somehow we played with our trains when we were kids. If the hobby is to appeal to kids the play factor must be brought back into it. What can we do to bring playing back into model railroading? How did we do with our trains that was play?

Trains are no longer the symbol of freedom in our culture.

There was a time when railroads were the path to movement and opportunity in the U.S. You got on a train to go to work or to get away on vacation or just to get up and go somewhere exciting. This is no longer so. Trains are still the symbol of brute strength and a dynamic struggle of tonnage against distance and gravity, but Henry Ford gave the car to every man, and the airplane became the symbol of enormous freedom of movement. Trains are just not in our psyche the way they used to be. There are still some of us who take the train first, think airplane or car second and get excited about that idea, but we are in the minority.

Adult Standards of Perfection and Complexity

I suspect that when neighborhood kids look at my train layout they cannot relate to it personally. It is so large, and so complex, that they likely cannot imagine doing anything like that themselves. The thought likely never enters their minds that this is something they could even attempt. The ten years I have been working on the PCV would seem like a life time to a youngster.

Early Positive Experiences in my Life with Trains.

In addition to the early live trains running past my house there were five other formative experiences that generated my love of model trains and sparked the dreams to build a model railroad:

1. The first was viewing a three rail American Flyer layout in the attic of a family friend. It was a 4x8 plywood board with a figure eight of track and no turnouts. I obviously could do that. I only saw it once but I still remember it.

2. The second was the Lionel layout in a neighbor's house that was put up at Christmas time. It was an L-shaped loop on a two plywood boards that the Christmas tree sat upon. There were no turnouts but had a nicely done set of Plasticville houses with streets that were detailed with lights and telephone poles. I thought it was beautiful. And it was built down low where I could see it.

3. The third was a Flyer hi-rail layout being built in an old basement coal bin by my scoutmaster. He was hand laying his track with solid, code 170 rail on multiple, ballasted ties with individual spikes. The engine he ran on it was a Union Pacific GP 7. You know the one I am talking about. It was a simple circle of track, but it looked cool and I could relate to the process. He demonstrated how he laid the track by pushing in spikes with a pair of pliers. He demonstrated how he laid the ballast and glued it down with a liquid he called water glass. I still don't know for sure what that stuff was. I don't think he ever finished it, but I walked away thinking "I could do that". And eventually I did. The seeds were planted then. But the natural evolution of our hobby moved my iteration of his layout beyond the scope of what a kid can relate to in the same way I related to his. We have simply gotten our trains too good for kids.

4. The fourth positive influence was the Flyer layout my Dad built for my older brother. I helped some but mostly I watched as he put roofing paper under the track to represent ballast. I watched as he nailed down the track and installed the wiring. I got excited every Washington's birthday as we planned the new piece of equipment we were going to purchase for the railroad. It was a simple layout. It started as a simple oval with two turnouts that fed into an inner loop so you could store one train and run the other. It was on plywood, and painted green with cardboard roads and Plasticville houses and stores. It was not much by today's standards but it inspired me to play. I sat for hours watching the trains roll past as I put my face down close to the track at the edge of the table. Eventually I built my own tin plate layout, which was essentially just a bigger version of what my dad built.

5. *HO Railroad the Grows*. This was a book published by Kalmbach and edited by Linn Westcott. The premise was to start with a simple layout simple and "complete" it; then make it progressively more complex with simple changes to the layout over time. This idea absolutely resonated with me, and made a complex layout seem completely obtainable. That small book was my bible for maybe five years. My first HO layout looked much like that layout. Of course it was a youngster's effort and the results reflected that level of skill, and resources, but I had a blast doing it. I was about 12 when I did that layout. This process generated the desire for



Steve Doyle and grandson Kiernan operate the NASG modules at the Duluth convention in 2010.

Photo Jeff Madden

more and better. But it started simple and grew just as Linn intended. I do not know if you remember it, but there was a sister publication to *Model Railroader* called *Model Trains*. It was for beginners. I purchased them all for years and found the pages full of the stuff of dreams. While they did not say so directly, it was directed to young model railroaders. I do not know why they stopped publication of it. I think it was a big loss when it disappeared.

How Can We Help Build a Young Generation of Model Railroaders?

I am not sure we can do much. But an examination of what inspired me might offer some clues:

1. Take your kids or grandchildren to where the real trains are. Ride the trains with them. Try to create positive, bonding family memories around trains.
2. Build a simple layout with your grandkids or children. This means putting your own advanced, complex model railroad on hold for at least some of your hobby time. This is an investment in your children and in the hobby. Be careful not to make it too complicated. A



One of your editor's grandsons, Connor age 14 mo., plays with Fisher Price pull train and wants the Standard gauge train to "go". Fisher Price train dates to the 1970s and son Terry, now almost 40.

Photo Jeff Madden

starter set, a sheet of plywood and a few simple structures are all you need to purchase. Spend some time building some things with the youngsters, and make sure they do part of it, and that they do not feel judged or made to feel their efforts do not measure up to our adult standard. They will develop their own adult feelings of inadequacy soon enough.

3. Play with trains with your kids. I don't think this means developing a complex operation scheme. It means handing them the throttle and watching as they run the trains around.

4. Plan a shopping trip with your kids for train stuff once in awhile. While consumerism has its shortcomings, it does add an element of planning and expectation that can be a healthy part of a hobby. Of course as adults some of us get sucked into that too far and then fail to keep it in balance, accumulating shelves and drawers full of unused train stuff. You can take them to a train show once in awhile, but I think a visit to the local hobby shop, if you can find one, is a better solution.

5. Look for and keep modeling literature around that is youngster appropriate. I do not know what that would be at this point. Maybe the publications for tinplaters would be the ticket here. I am not sure what is out there, but there is bound to be something. One thing I am fairly certain of is that the mainstream, adult model railroad literature is perhaps too advanced, and thus maybe intimidating instead of inspiring.

6. Expose your kids to some train layouts that are simple enough for them to relate to. If all they see are modern, state-of-the-art, adult model railroads, I am pretty certain they may never see the potential in it for them.

7. Maybe invite your kids or grandkids to build something for your railroad. This means you must be big enough, and secure enough to actually place it on the layout regardless of how it looks when they finish it.

8. Take them to a participation style hobby event where they can do something hands on, such as the one I reported on in the last issue.

9. Buy a starter train set of any scale, and build a small, simple train layout with one of your kids or grandkids. Make it a joint project that involves them in the planning and execution. Then take time to play with it with them. If you can figure out how to play. We regularly get out the Thomas the Tank Engine trains and put them together with my 3 year-old granddaughter.

Here is something I want you to think about, and respond to if you have ideas. The other day while I was at a client's house a 12 year old Chinese girl sat on the couch near the piano while I worked. She was focused intently on her smart phone. Eventually I asked her what game she was playing. I do not remember the name of the game, but it was a game where the participant managed airports and aircraft flights. That sounded a lot like model railroad operations to me. Two questions came to mind: If a youngster can wrap her mind around, and get engaged in such a game, why not model railroading operations? It seemed like the same thing to me. And question two, is there an APP for

model railroad operations on our smart phones? If so, this might be the kind of hook that could attract youngsters. If none exists, does anybody want to write one? If there is one already, are we missing something for our own hobby?

I think a quick summary is: We must give back to the hobby that we have enjoyed so much in order to pass it on. Everything listed here, and there are more things that could be added, involves working (or playing) with kids and trains in some way.

This is a controversial subject that has been covered in the press a fair amount lately. I am interested in discussing this primarily as part of a solution to the situation. Maybe there are no solutions. I think the hobby is destined to age no matter what we do. If you have ideas on this, please write Jeff as a letter to the editor. I am eager to hear what you have to say.

- Sam

Boy, your growing up with trains story mimics mine to a great extent and probably most of the other model railroaders in our generation too. I've printed much of my background over the years too. Yes, you have many great ideas we should all be considering with youngsters to get them involved in the hobby. And too, besides youngsters, we also have to recruit and educate the "baby boomers" to re-start interest in the hobby (or even start) so they can in turn pass on the interest to their kids and grandkid- Ed.



My daughter, Jeannette, is "training" her nephew, my 2nd grandson, Morgan (4 mo.), by having him view 2012 Christmas train setup. Yes, I know it's not S, but it's a train.
Photo Jeff Madden

 www.nasg.org

PORT LINES HOBBIES



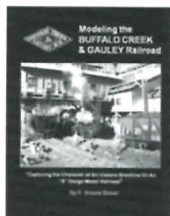
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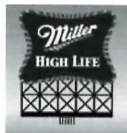
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S IN NON-S PUBLICATIONS

- 2013 *MR Calendar* has a photo of Ed Loizeaux's layout.
- Nov. 2012 *RMC*: Feature on Pete Smith's Sn3 Loon Lake layout.
- Feb. 2013 *CTT*: Feature on Dave Tori's backdrops on his AF layout.
- Jan. 2013 *Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazette*: Brooks Stover's BC&G on cover and feature, plus some Sn3 articles.
- March 2013 *MR*: Be sure and check out page 90-91 in the March issue of *Model Railroader*. S gauge gets "front page" billing with a Trackside Photo taken on our Southeast Michigan S Gaugers portable display layout. This neat scene was conceived by Earl Carlsen and Bob Stelmach with structures contributed by several club members. The engines are both from American Models with detailing added. We couldn't have asked for a nicer spread to show what can be done in our favorite scale. - Brooks Stover

DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS

In December's article on the Fall S Fest I forgot to mention a layout on display - the Helix one that was the work of State-Line S Gauger Tom Behles. Dave Pippitt and Dave Oberholtzer assisted in construction.

NEW CLUB CONTACT

Please note a change in the contact info for the SVAFC (Sacramento Valley American Flyer Club):

Contact:

Carl Rudolph (Coordinator)
19400 Superior Drive
Twain Harte, CA 95383
209-586-9905
svafc@sonnet.com

S FEST WEST COMING UP

S Fest West will be hosted by Southern California S Gaugers Club (SCSGC) on May 3 through 5, 2013 with Guest Speaker Don Heimburger at the Saturday evening banquet. For a registration form or more info contact Fred at

sfestwest2013@yahoo.com or call (310) 390-3369

O SCALE WEST + S REPORT

The O Scale West + S in Santa Clara, CA was held on Jan 24 through 26. There were 31 attendees who listed S scale as their primary scale. There were four S vendors: Howard's Trains, Jettie Padgett, Gill Hulin, and Gary Pfeiffer. Several other vendors had S scale suitable merchandise as well. Paul Vaughn showed his retractable in-track magnetic uncoupler and manual switch controls. There were also the usual track parts, motors, book, videos and electronic gadgets that are universal. Those that came to the show were treated to a lot of hard to find S merchandise at very reasonable prices. Jettie was selling off a friend's collection of brass that had me looking hard, even though I have too much stuff already. Unfortunately, the coincidental timing of the OSW+S and the Springfield, MA meet meant that several of the usual S vendors were not at the OSW+S.

Part of the S entertainment was the usual group dinner at Harry's Hofbrau - always good food in too large servings. Several layouts were open for visiting including Ed Loizeaux's very complete NYC, Arden Goehring's UP, which had much more scenery than last year, plus Don Harper's fully detailed Sn3 layout. Several clinics were also part of the show including Ed Loizeaux's presentation of Lionel's new locos and how Lionel is responding to the scale model side of the hobby. The U33C now looks much more like a scale model, and the new SD70ace has many options that make it compatible for both scale and hi-rail applications. Also shown was the Lionel Y-3 2-8-8-2 with the Fred Rouse scale conversion which was very impressive, and which also proved its operational potential on Ed's home layout.

- Bill Winans,
Western VP

MORE S WEST 8 REPORT:

This is written from the perspective of an S Scaler who is very particular about the appearance of his equipment and the way it operates. My experience with Lionel in O made me skeptical about the company's entrance into our scale. I read with interest the posts on the list, but kept quiet until I could see the product for myself.

I was very surprised and impressed with what I saw at S West 8. Three Lionel scale locos were presented at a clinic presented by the S Scale SIG, and then demonstrated all weekend at Ed L's fantastic NYC layout.

The lineup consisted of U33C in SP grey & bloody nose red, NW SD70 & Virginian Y3.

The U33C was a second generation unit. The paint and lettering were very good. No blurred lines. The proportions appeared correct and the detail on shell such as doors, exhaust fans, etc, were sharp and crisp. The engine has scale wheels. The sound was excellent though it was too loud for my tastes - an easy fix. I was disappointed to see that the engine still has the swinging pilots though it was not too noticeable on the broad curves of Ed's layout.

I understand the biggest improvement was internal. The engine now has a Lionel Sound DCC decoder. It runs like a champ. The slow speed performance was impressive and acceleration was smooth and consistent.

The SD70 was even more impressive. I am not a modern diesel guy, but if I was I would add this engine to my roundhouse in a heartbeat. The level of detail is consistent with the excellent diesel engines S Helper produced. Lionel has made a very clever improvement regarding the swinging pilot issue. Out of the box, the loco has a swinging pilot but Lionel has also predrilled two screw holes in the shell so you can fix the pilots with screws that

are provided – think of how S Helper had interchangeable pilots for their switchers. Same concept – Don Thompson, did you talk to those guys? :-)

As with the U33C, the paint and lettering on this model was sharp and crisp. The proportions of this model looked accurate. It is a spectacular scale model. The sound system which operated with DCC was excellent with the jet engine whine characteristic of model diesels, but again too loud out of the box for my tastes. The engine has a smoke unit which produced a significant volume of smoke. Lionel must have thought it was producing a 1st generation ALCO.

The rumor is that the model is suppose to come with scale wheels, but the sample had hirail wheels and couplers. We did run the engine up and down Ed's yard and the performance was impressive. Very smooth acceleration and great slow speed.

However the crème d' la crème was Lionel's Y3. I had heard that Lionel's Mikado was a great scale piece but I have yet to see one. I was told that Y3 has even better detail than the Mikado. In any event, the engine looked fantastic pulling 30 NW coal hoppers and a hack. I am an Espee steam guy so I do not know if the details were correct, but the engine clearly looked like an accurate representation of the pictures of the Y3's I had seen. The en-

gine was built like a tank and very heavy. All the motor electronics are in the engine – there are no wires between the tender and engine. Rather Lionel uses a very cleaver infra- red connection. Likewise, the tender is a stand-alone unit that has all the sound electronics. If there is a weakness in this product, this could be it – not enough wheel pickups because the engine did stall on a few of Ed's dead frog turnouts. The sound is spectacular. Easily on par with sounds produced by Tsunami steam decoders which are the best on the market IMHO. Man does this beast smoke! And the cool thing is at low speeds the smoke puffs with the chuff.

A shout out goes to Fred Rouse. He did a fantastic job machining the drivers on this engine which only comes in hirail as well as the programming work necessary for the engine to run on DCC. The engine tracked well through Ed's code 100 track work. Fred is an excellent machinist and his skill was very evident on this engine. If Lionel ever produced a cab forward that matched the detail of the Y3 (are you listening Lionel?) that only came in hirail, I would immediately ship it off to Fred.

Well, that's all for now. I think Lionel's entry in the S scale side of the hobby is great news. However, do not take my word, go check these items out for yourself.
- John Gibson <http://sscale.org>

Calendar

April 25-28 2013: 28th Annual Sn3 Symposium, Ramada Mall of America, Bloomington, MN. frolin@frolin.net --- www.frolin.net/sn3-2013.

May 3-5 2013: Silver Anniversary - Spring S Spree, Quaker Square Inn, Akron, OH. www.quakersquare.com. Contact: Mike Graham 216-398-9313 mograham@hotmail.com.

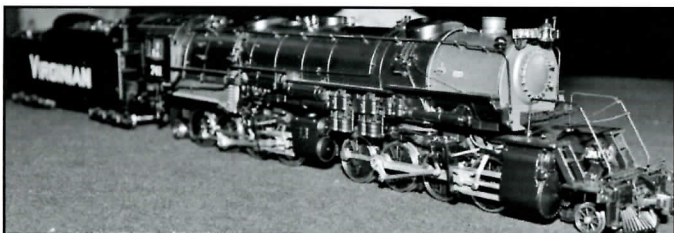
May 3-5 2013: S Fest West 2013, Embassy Suites, Arcadia, CA. Layout tour, swap meet, etc. Fred Ruby: 310-390-3369, sfestwest2013@yahoo.com. Sponsored by the Southern California S Gaugers.

June 22-30: TCA National Convention, St. Louis, MO www.tca59.org.

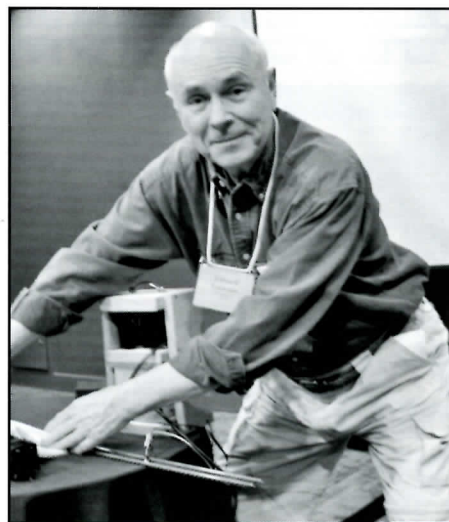
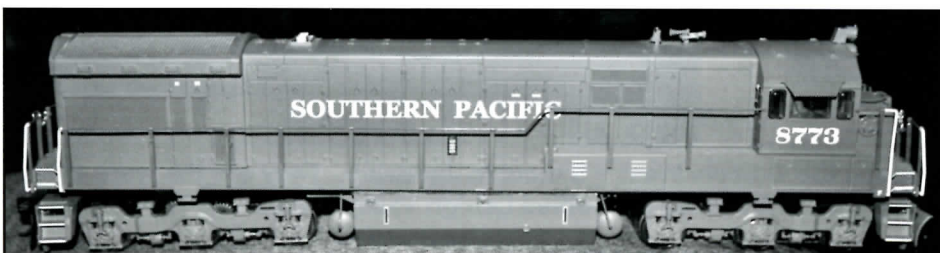
July 14-20, NMRA Peachtree Express Convention, To be held in Atlanta, GA. www.nmra2013.org

Aug. 7-10, 2013: NASG Annual Convention, Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel, Scranton, PA. Hotel # 570-342-8300. This is the location of Steamtown. Info: www.convention2013@nasg.org

Bids open for NASG Annual Conventions 2014 and beyond. Contact Walt Jopke, 6611 Countryside Dr., Eden Prairie, MN 55346-2211. jopke@vic.com - 612-934-9183.



Scale versions of Lionel's Y-3 and U33C as displayed by Ed Loizeaux at O Scale West + S



Ed Loizeaux with a big grin is unveiling a scale version of the N&W Y-3 2-8-8-2 at the January O Scale West + S.

RailMail continued from page 5

than pursue a skill developing hobby. However, it has been my experience that converts from other scales take up S scale, not AF collecting!

It seems many S scalers today might say, "If every manufacturer shut down and every hobby shop closed its doors tomorrow, it wouldn't affect my hobby one bit." Personally, I think I have enough on shelves to keep me going for the next 100 years. I know manufacturers don't want to hear that.

In my late teens, I eased into S scale by selling off my AF collection and proceeding to handlay code 100 and code 70 rail on my own ties and began kit and scratch-building rolling stock and structures.

I see a split in the hobby as a whole along the lines of (not of AF vs scale) but of collecting on one hand as opposed to building on the other. It seems hobbyists in all scales are leaning more towards collecting these days, thankfully for the manufacturer. Most hobbyists today simply buy ready-made components, assemble them on a layout, fill in the gaps with scenery and consider themselves model railroaders. I will point out that the building aspect of the hobby is not confined to the scale enthusiasts; there are some AF fans who have done a fair amount of model building on their layouts.

The bottom line - to each his own - whatever gives you enjoyment. It's not worth making an issue over which is what happens when someone asks me to embrace another hobby - sorry, but I'm busy with my own. P.S. I find the term "rivet counters" offensive to those who pursue scale fidelity.

- Paul Raham, Marlbank, ON, Canada

Yes, I'm like you, I probably have enough shelf stock to keep me

going for a long time. I might, however, buy something new and sell off the old. As to the term "rivet counter", I believe this came about years ago when scale model railroaders machined much of their own locomotives and rolling stock - they really did have to count the rivets. Yes, the term can be taken as sarcasm, but often it is meant tongue in cheek by those who just don't crave as much detail or don't have the skills for such. And we in turn rib them as tinlaters. Glad to hear from up north where there is a lot of nice scale S modeling going on. Ed.

Testing the Waters: I encourage anyone interested in seeing new S scale rolling stock kits produced in the coming couple years to visit my web page to view potential candidates. You will note that each image has an associated number which represents the total inquiries to date. Most are woefully short of the "magic 80" minimum needed to make any kit a viable (read: profitable) venture.

Please click on the link below, look over the options, then email me with your vote. I only need your reservation tally, no money.

http://www.smokymountainmodelworks.com/S_What_If.html

- Jim King

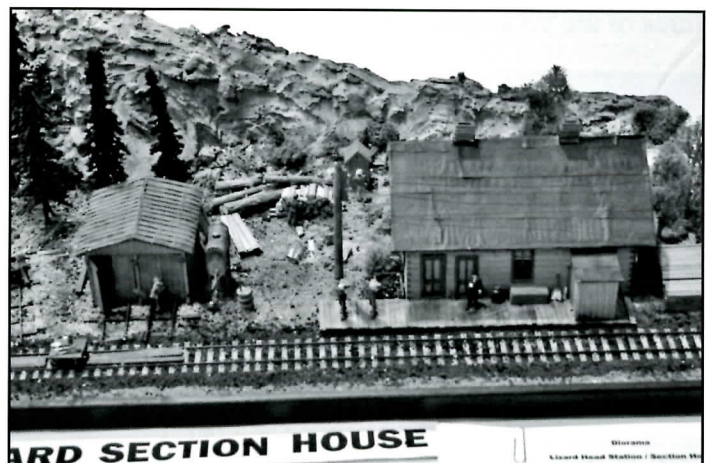
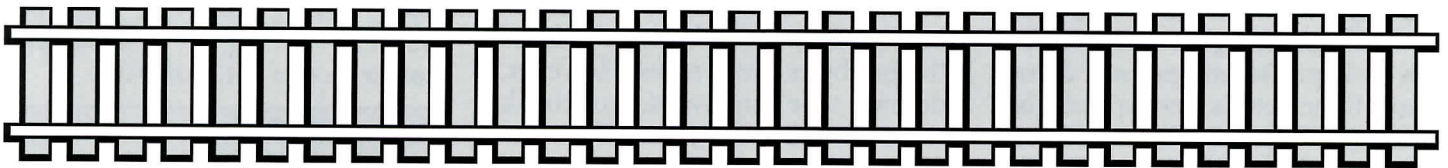
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Comments: The easiest to agree with statement I have ever seen in the *Dispatch*; the quote in Richard Churchill's article, A.C. Gilbert "took pride in making only scale models." Makes the letter a few pages later sound VERY odd, "Lionel does not need to make scale trains, because they should be toy trains."

- Ted Larson, Minnesota.

Well, old A.C. did try to make mostly scale locos and rolling stock until in later years we got the infamous Casey Jones, the homely F9 and the Docksider. And, today Lionel is most likely conflicted as the toy train market ain't what it used to be. Ed.



These two structures took 2nd and 3rd place at the O Scale West + S meet in January. They are the work of Nelson Steinmetz of Arizona. The building on the left is obviously a modified Lehigh Valley Models kit. The one on the right??

NASG News cont. from page 4

This change formalizes rules for this new category that has been offered as optional in the past. It provides advice as to what will be considered in judging this category. - Bill Winans, Jim Kindraka

Proposed change to the scale contest entry form:

Change the maximum points awarded for Conformance from 10 points to twenty points and the maximum for Scratch Built Materials from 25 points to 15 points.

The reasoning behind this change is that scale modelers are doing increasing research in determining how the model needs to look to be true to the prototype, and this attention to detail should carry a higher reward. So many new detail parts are available for use in models; the question is to what extent should scratch building be rewarded just for the sake of scratch building instead of using a prototypical commercial part. This is similar to a change made by the NMRA

The complete rules document is on the NASG web site under this years convention.

- Monte Heppe

Chairman, NASG Contest Committee

2012 AF CAR UPDATE:

The AF car shipment arrived about 2 weeks ago, a day before we left on vacation. We started mailing them out this week. All orders should have been mailed by the end of the January. We have about

90 cars left for sale. The ad insert appears in this Dispatch.

- Doug Peck

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LIBRARY DATA BASE UPDATE:

S Scale Product Database Project (SSPDP) -- this is my web project at this time. Check it out at www.sspdp.info. This is a new home and expansion for the online searchable product database that I started with Stan Furmanak many years ago. In the fall I expanded the database to include almost all of the Pacific Rail Shops cars (probably some special runs are still missing). And I'm in the process now of adding all the S Helper Service cars & locos, based on data that Don T has provided. All updates are added online, so as they go in they are immediately searchable. Planned additions once SHS is completed are:

- Downs Model Railroad Tanks cars

- RSSVP models (cars)

- Structures (initial database of S scale structures)

For each entry I try to add as much info as possible, down to car number, etc. For all of the entries (both present and future), I am also working to include photos -- addition of photos is on a completely separate track, since photos are added as they are available.

- Michael Greene, Librarian

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NASG AWARDS 2012:

Hmm, seems the NASG Awards weren't mentioned in the last two *Dispatches*. These were announced at the Chattanooga Convention last August.

**Bernie Thomas Award:
Bill Peter of PBL**

**Sandersfeld Award
(manufacturer of the year):
Lionel LLC**

**Perles Award
(article in non-S pub):
Brooks Stover**

**Josh Seltzer Award
(website):
Peter Vanvliet - 2nd year**

Wanted:

Membership Chairman.

Must be able to spend at least two hours per week processing memberships and related information, with the exception of the early summer months when many more hours are required. Must have a computer with Windows XP or Windows 7 operating system. The database uses Windows Access 2010 – if you don't have, the NASG will reimburse you for the cost of getting it. You will work closely with Pat Evans, Peter Vanvliet and Jim Kindraka. All postage costs related to the position will be reimbursed. Claude Demers, current membership chair, will aid in the transition.

American Models Winter Sale is now in progress on all items on this page for **30% off !** Overstocked items will be reduced at unrepresented prices (items likely never to be made again). Including discounts up to **65%** on many of our 3 bay CD grain hoppers and tank cars. See items listed on our home page for listings <www.americanmodels.com>, call mail or e mail requests.



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b sets. (Phase III on left rail in picture)



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